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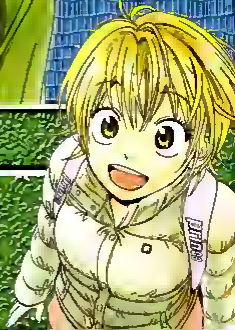

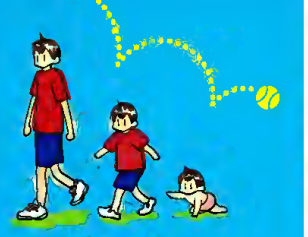

初めて買ったCDの曲と
そのカップリング曲が、
いまだに私のiPodの再生回数
1位2位を独走しているのを見て、
中学生の頃から変わってないなぁと思う。
音楽は、同じものをずっと聴く方です。

勝木 光

SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

KCM4459

Baby Steps
ベイビーステップ
16

勝木 光

講談社

Baby Steps ベイビーステップ 16 勝木 光 講談社

9784063844597

雑誌 42272-59

ISBN978-4-06-384459-7

C9979 ¥419E（0）

1929979004194

講談社
定価：本体419円（税別）

KC 勝木 光 作品

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SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

Cover Design／Veia

2011.4

SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

16

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勝木光
Baby Steps
16
ベイビーステップ

全日本ジュニア出場権を得るには最低でもベスト16入りが大前提!!

関東ジュニアテニス大会、運命の2回戦突入!

エーちゃんの対戦相手は第5シードの井出義明!!

持ち前のキャラクターで、観客を味方につける井出!

しゃ

完全アウェイの中、チェンジオブペースで攻撃のエーちゃん!!

しし!

惑わされるな!!

目の前の相手だけを見て

真っ向勝負だ!

第1シード 難波江優

第2シード 岡田隆行

第3シード 荒谷寛

ライバルは他にも!!

Baby Step ベビーステップ

人物紹介

エーちゃん 丸尾栄一郎

STC所属。「次の全日本ジュニアで優勝、そしてプロへ」が命題。そこで優勝できなければプロを諦めるという条件付きで、テニス最優先の生活を送っている。同じ夢を持つナツは心の支え。相思相愛の二人は、ついに交際開始!

ナツ 鷹崎奈津

STC所属。プロ志望で、先日の神奈川ジュニアでは2連覇達成。理論派・エーちゃんとは真逆の超感覚派で、それが互いの刺激に。ただいま恋もテニスも絶好調!!

青井コーチ

STCでのエーちゃんのコーチ。元プロ選手という経験に裏付けされた指導でエーちゃんをサポート。

清水亜希

コーチである母親と二人三脚でプロを目指すジュニア日本一の選手で、ナツは彼女に4戦全敗中。

佐々木姫子

エーちゃんの試合に必ず駆けつけてくれる心強い応援団。姫子はエーちゃんへの想いを実らす失恋。

影山小次郎

影山は親友。

Baby Steps

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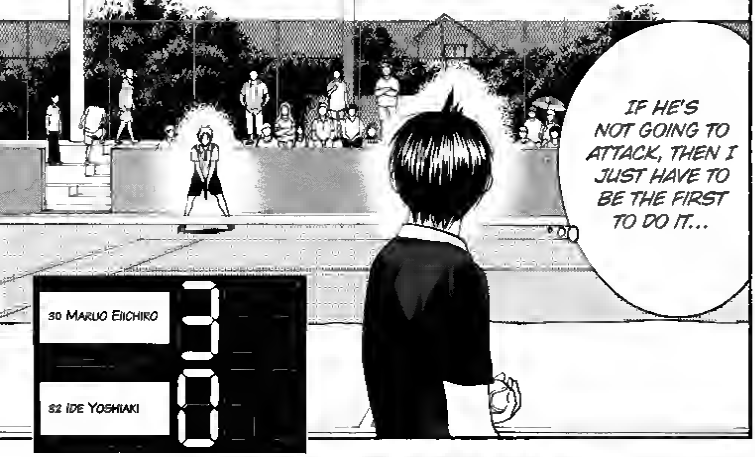
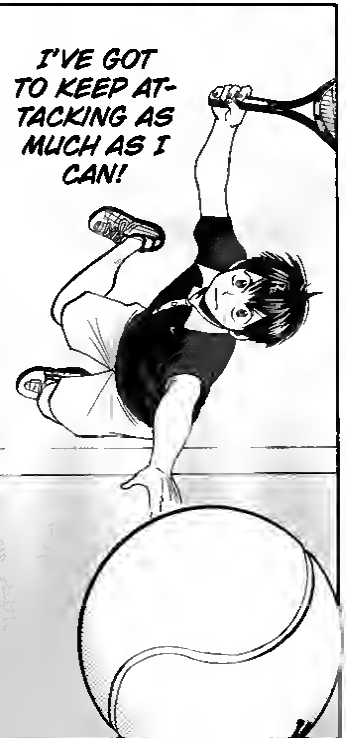
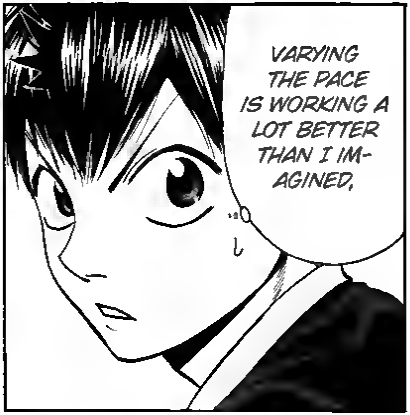
to Giant Strides







#142: BROAD AND VAGUE

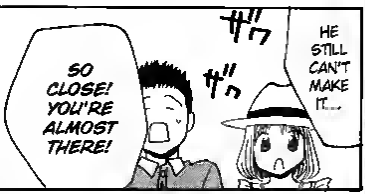
HA
HA
ドゥ
AFTER A SIDESPIN SLICE SERVE, NEXT IS...
ハァン
ぎゅん
A DEEP TOP SPIN!!

THIS IS...
TAT-TT ..TA!
HE'LL LOSE HIS PACE!!
IF HE SEES A FAST FLAT RIGHT AFTER A HIGH-LOOPING TOP-SPIN...
Mumble
AND THIS IS...

TAT

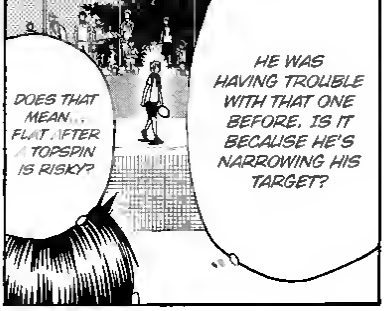
H-HERE COMES!
!?

15 - 0.
OUT

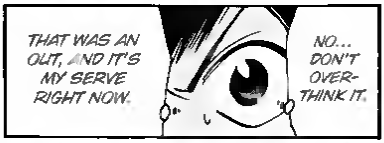

SO CLOSE! YOU'RE ALMOST THERE!
HE STILL CAN'T MAKE IT...

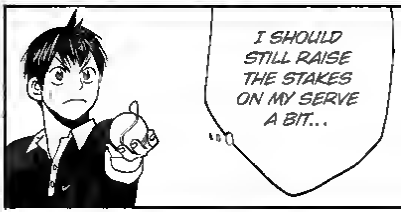
YEAH... THE UMPIRE'S GOT SOME GOOD EYES.
HEY, WASN'T THAT AMAZING?

あ～あ～

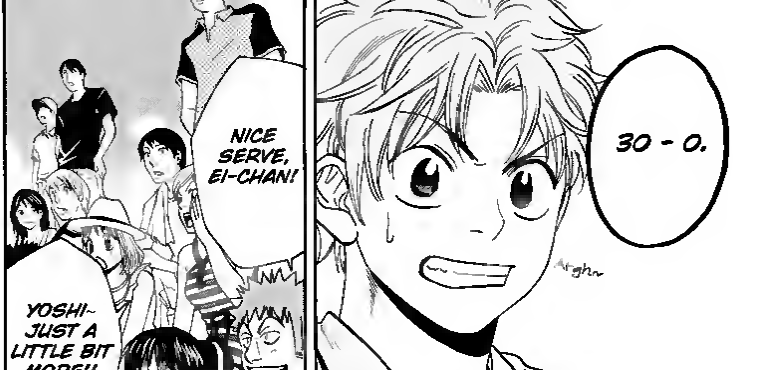

HE WAS HAVING TROUBLE WITH THAT ONE BEFORE, IS IT BECAUSE HE'S NARROWING HIS TARGET?
DOES THAT MEAN... FLAT AFTER A TOPSPIN IS RISKY?

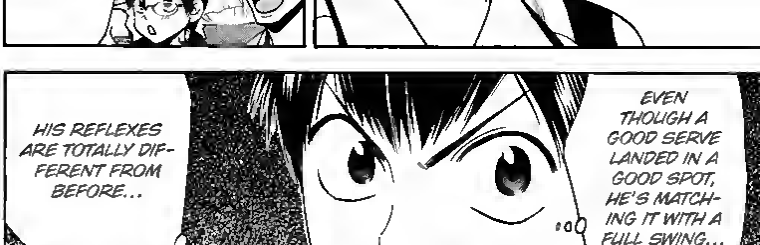
Phew
THAT WAS CLOSE... HE WAS ABOUT TO ACE THE FLAT AFTER THE TOP-SPIN.


THAT WAS AN OUT, AND IT'S MY SERVE RIGHT NOW.
NO... DON'T OVER-THINK IT.


I SHOULD STILL RAISE THE STAKES ON MY SERVE A BIT...

AND TRY TO GO FOR AN ACE...
EVEN IF I CAN'T GET IT, IT SHOULD AT LEAST BE ENOUGH TO PUT ME AT AN ADVANTAGE...


NICE SERVE, EI-CHAN!
YOSHI~ JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE!!
30 - 0.
Argh~


HIS REFLEXES ARE TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM BEFORE...
EVEN THOUGH A GOOD SERVE LANDED IN A GOOD SPOT, HE'S MATCHING IT WITH A FULL SWING...

HA
TWO POINTS MORE... I WANT TO KEEP THIS GAME NO MATTER WHAT!
BEFORE HE GETS THE FULL HANG OF THE TIMING...

SHOOT... I WAS TOO TENSE.
HA
TRY TO KEEP THE SECOND SERVE AS FAST AS
BUT WATCH OUT FOR HIS RETURN, SO CENTER...
HA

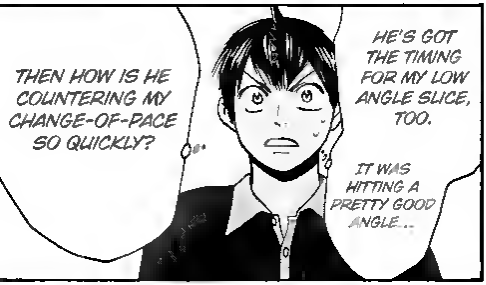
STRONG... BUT HE'S NOT GOING FOR AN ACE.
THEN I'LL USE A LOW ANGLE SLICE HERE TO CHANGE THE PACE...
JUST AS A PRECAUTION, I'LL AVOID A FLAT SHOT LIKE LAST TIME
FOR THIS GUY, IT'S...
TAT... TA

RGH
IT'S HERE!!

HA

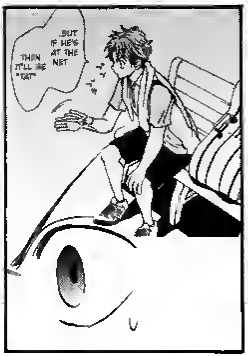
YES!!
YEAHH!!

30 - 15
WOW-WWW-WWW-WW

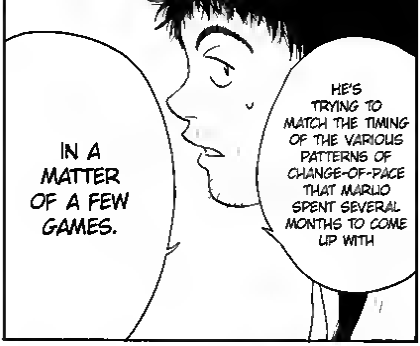

HE'S GOT THE TIMING FOR MY LOW ANGLE SLICE, TOO.
IT WAS HITTING A PRETTY GOOD ANGLE...
THEN HOW IS HE COUNTERING MY CHANGE-OF-PACE SO QUICKLY?

HE BLASTED THROUGH!!
IDE'S SO COOOOOL!!

JUST BY CONCENTRATING ON SOMETHING IN HIS HEAD...

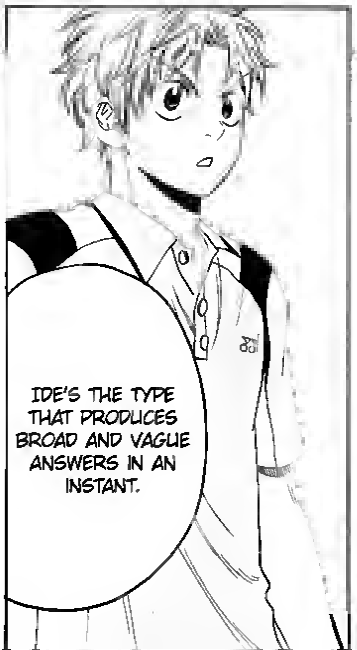

BUT IF HE'S AT THE NET
THEN I'LL BE "DAT"

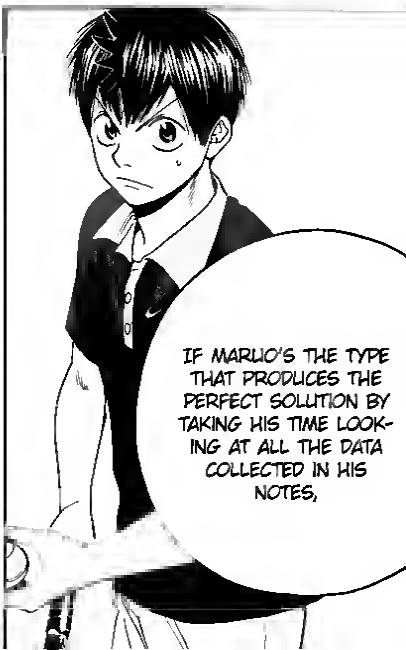
ALL IDE-KUN'S DONE SO FAR IS HOLDING BACK ON HIS ONE-SHOT KILL STRATEGY A BIT, AND...

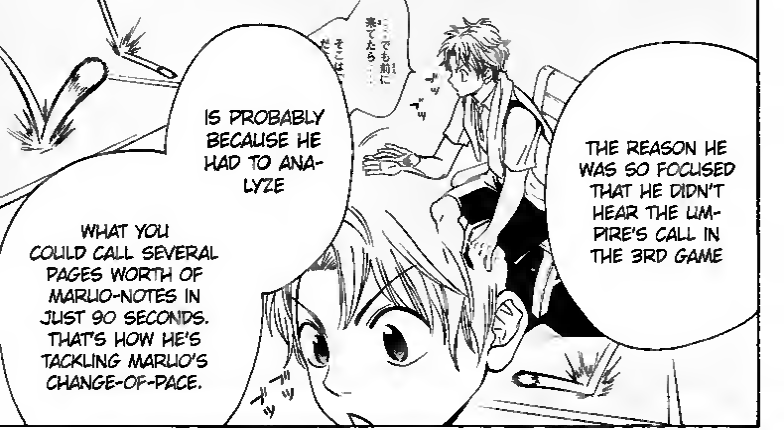

HE'S TRYING TO MATCH THE TIMING OF THE VARIOUS PATTERNS OF CHANGE-OF-PACE THAT MARUO SPENT SEVERAL MONTHS TO COME UP WITH
IN A MATTER OF A FEW GAMES.

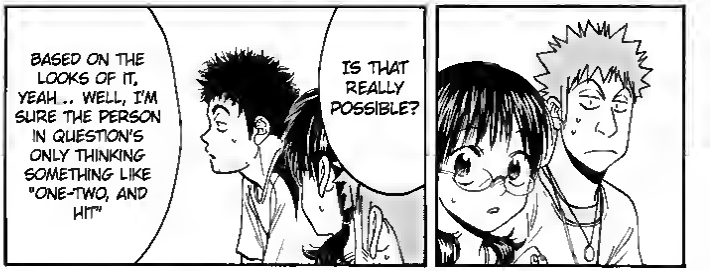
HE'S GOT SOME TERRIFYINGLY GOOD INTUITION
HUH?

WELL, THAT IS, IN SOME SENSE, TRUE.
THAT PERSON SEEMS LIKE THE COMPLETE OPPOSITE OF MARUO-KUN.


IDE'S THE TYPE THAT PRODUCES BROAD AND VAGUE ANSWERS IN AN INSTANT.


IF MARUO'S THE TYPE THAT PRODUCES THE PERFECT SOLUTION BY TAKING HIS TIME LOOKING AT ALL THE DATA COLLECTED IN HIS NOTES,


THE REASON HE WAS SO FOCUSED THAT HE DIDN'T HEAR THE UMPIRE'S CALL IN THE 3RD GAME
IS PROBABLY BECAUSE HE HAD TO ANALYZE
WHAT YOU COULD CALL SEVERAL PAGES WORTH OF MARUO-NOTES IN JUST 90 SECONDS. THAT'S HOW HE'S TACKLING MARUO'S CHANGE-OF-PACE.


IS THAT REALLY POSSIBLE?
BASED ON THE LOOKS OF IT, YEAH .. WELL, I'M SURE THE PERSON IN QUESTION'S ONLY THINKING SOMETHING LIKE "ONE-TWO, AND HIT"

BUT THE TERRIFYING THING IS ..
THAT DESPITE HIS SOLUTIONS BEING SO BROAD,
THEY'RE STILL HITTING THE RIGHT SPOTS.

MAYBE I SHOULDN'T WAIT AND JUST GO WITH A RISING SHOT?
NO...
THAT FLAT AFTER THE TOPSPIN SHOULD BE A BIT FASTER....
mumble mumble
LOOKS LIKE I CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT SLICE...
GUYS WHO RELY ON POWER AND TECHNIQUES ARE MUCH EASIER TO UNDERSTAND.
BUT STILL, PLAYING AGAINST SUCH A RANDOMLY CHANGING PACE
IS A LOT HARDER THAN I IMAGINED...
0 - 3... HE'S CREATED QUITE A GAP...
TURNING IT AROUND FROM HERE...
CAN I GO FOR IT?

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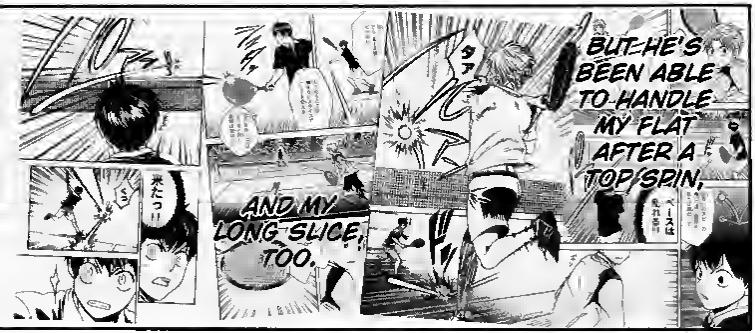
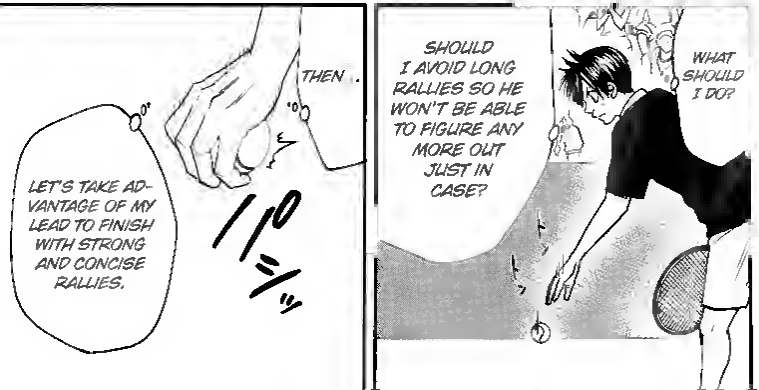
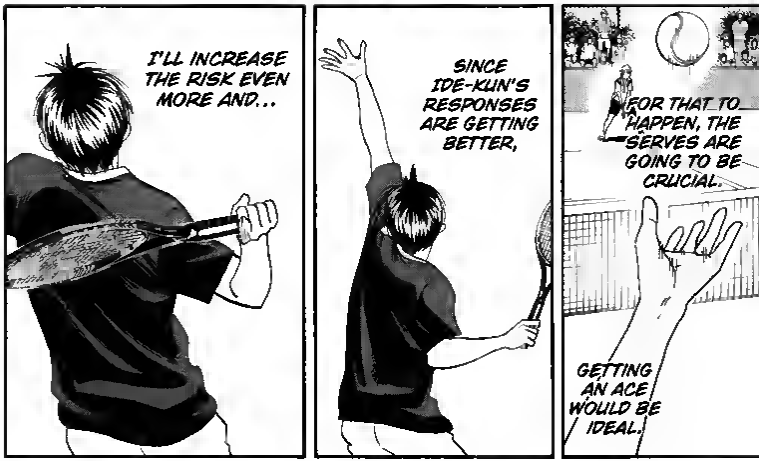
RESPOND-
ING TO MY
CHANGE-OF
-PACE THIS
QUICKLY...
IS THAT
EVEN POSSI-
BLE?
MARUO EIICHIRO
IDE YOSHIAKI
Baby Steps


BUT HE'S
BEEN ABLE
TO HANDLE
MY FLAT
AFTER A
TOP SPIN.
AND MY
LONG SLICE,
TOO.

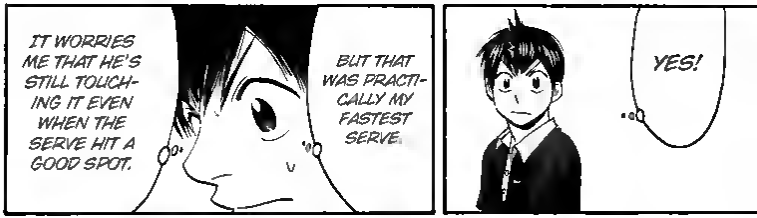

WHAT
SHOULD
I DO?
SHOULD
I AVOID LONG
RALLIES SO HE
WON'T BE ABLE
TO FIGURE ANY
MORE OUT
JUST IN
CASE?
THEN...
LET'S TAKE AD-
VANTAGE OF MY
LEAD TO FINISH
WITH STRONG
AND CONCISE
RALLIES.

I'LL KEEP ATTACKING AGGRESSIVELY EVEN AS I RUN AWAY!!
slurp
#143: [illegible] OF INVINCIBILITY


I'LL INCREASE THE RISK EVEN MORE AND...
SINCE IDE-KUN'S RESPONSES ARE GETTING BETTER,
FOR THAT TO HAPPEN, THE SERVES ARE GOING TO BE CRUCIAL.
GETTING AN ACE WOULD BE IDEAL.

RGH
40 - 15
WOAAAAH, SO FAST!!

EI-CHAN'S AMAZING!
HE CAN HIT EVEN FASTER?


IT WORRIES ME THAT HE'S STILL TOUCHING IT EVEN WHEN THE SERVE HIT A GOOD SPOT.
BUT THAT WAS PRACTICALLY MY FASTEST SERVE.
YES!

110キロ
BUT IF I TAKE THIS ONE, I'LL MAINTAIN A KEEP, SO IT'LL ALL BE RESET!!
AFTER A FLAT, NEXT UP IS... A WIDE SLICE!!

HE'S RE-ACTING TO THE DIF-FERENT SERVES, TOO.
HA
IN ORDER TO FINISH THIS AS QUICKLY AS POSSI-BLE...
HIT WITH AN EVEN STRONG-ER FLAT THAN THE ONES HE'S BEEN COUN-TERING...

...ONCE HE'S TRICKED,
DROP SHOT!!

HIS RE-
SPONSE...
IS QUICK!!
!
3 cm

HONESTLY, HOW ARE YOU A TOP-LEVEL PLAYER IN THE NATION?
YEAH... EVEN THOUGH THERE'S A FAIR AMOUNT OF TENNIS PLAYERS IN THE COUNTRY.
I MEAN, YOSHI IS PRETTY FAST AND QUITE STRONG, TOO, BUT IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE HE'S THAT GOOD, RIGHT?
YEAH, YEAH. IT CERTAINLY DOESN'T SEEM LIKE HE'S THAT TALENTED, DOES IT?
カチーン
HUH?
WHAT ARE YOU SUGGESTING... ARE YOU PICKING A FIGHT?
よか牛乳
F-FINE! THEN I'LL SHOW IT TO YOU!!
HUH... SHOW US... WHAT?
SHUT UP AND JUST STAND THERE.

ORAAA!
OKAY, START!
YOU HAVE TO KEEP STILL AND YOU'RE ONLY ALLOWED TO PUSH WITH YOUR HANDS
IF YOU TAKE EVEN ONE STEP, YOU LOSE. GOT IT?
EH ? AH, OH, THAT THING SURE
AH, Y -YOU ... BAS-TARD
STUPID! I KNEW YOU'D DO THAT.
'KA~Y, IT'S MY WIN!!
ドン
HUH?
ヨロッ
WAIT, I'M NEXT! I'M PRETTY GOOD AT THIS!
OH, SURE, THEN YOU'RE UP
DAMN YOU... YOU ARE GOOD!
What're they doing?
SHIT...! ONE MORE!!
HEY, SOME-ONE! COME BEAT HIM!
HUH? I LOST AGAIN...

FOR REAL?!
OF COURSE.
I'VE NEVER EVER LOST AT THIS EVEN ONCE!
WHAT DOES THIS HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOUR TENNIS BEING ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL?
EH...?
SO WHAT...?
IT'S RELATED
HELL NO.
IT DEFINITELY IS!!
CAUSE THEY'RE BOTH 1-ON-1 AND THEY'RE BOTH ABOUT WHO'S GOING TO ATTACK, AND WHO'S GOING TO DEFEND
FOR ME, THEY'RE SUPER SIMILAR OR MORE LIKE THEY'RE PRETTY MUCH THE SAME!
EVERYTHING GETS DECIDED BY YOUR REACTIONS AND THE DECISIONS YOU MAKE IN THE SPLIT OF A SECOND

WHAT DO YOU THINK?
UMM... WELL, HE IS ACTUALLY STRONG AT BOTH, SO IT'S SOMEWHAT CONVINCING, BUT IT'S PRETTY HARD TO BELIEVE.
OH~
EVEN THE STRONGEST GUY IN OUR CLASS CAN'T BEAT HIM.
OHHH~
EVEN OUR SCHOOL GIANT SUGIYAMA'S NO GOOD!
OHHH-HHH
NO WAY, KONDOU FROM JUDO TEAM LOST!!

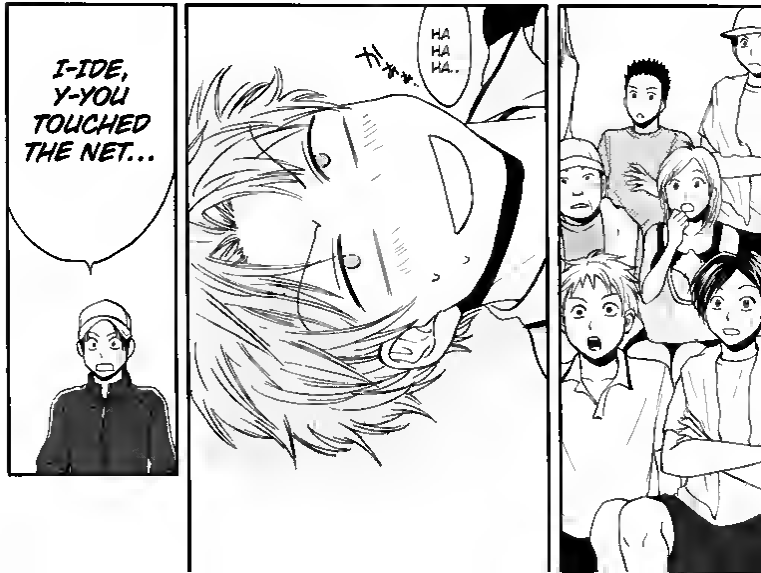
YEAH, KONDOU. YOU LET THE JUDO TEAM DOWN.
H-HEY... WHAT THE HECK IS HE!?
YEAH, THIS IS PRETTY AMAZING...
わー
わー
わー
HIS INTUITION IS INSANE.
INTUI-TION?
WELL, I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT SOME SIXTH-SENSE STUFF.
GO~
GUESS YOU COULD CALL IT AN INSTANTANEOUS DECISION-MAKING ABILITY.
HE'S CATCHING WHAT HIS OPPO-NENT'S GONNA DO BASED ON ALL SORTS OF THINGS LIKE THEIR PERSON-ALITIES, BODY LAN-GUAGE AND FACIAL EXPRESSIONS.
IT'S THE POWER TO CHOOSE AND EXECUTE THE BEST COUNTERMEASURE IN THE SPLIT OF A SECOND

I WONDER IF HE'LL TRY OUT FOR JUDO.
IF IT'S HIM, HE COULD TOTALLY GO TO THE NATIONALS IN ONE YEAR.
FOR REAL?!
WELL, MAYBE THAT'S A BIT TOO MUCH.
WOWWWW!!! EVEN THE SUMO TEAM GOT OWNED!!
CRAP!! NO ONE CAN BEAT HIM!!
おお
おお
SEE? I'M GREAT.... RIGHT?
YEAH... YOU'RE GREAT.
ドッ

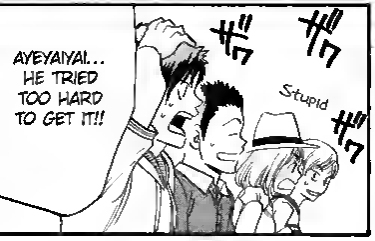
EVEN THOUGH THE TIMING, AND THE SHOT... WERE PERFECT.
Wilson
3

DAHH
タッ
OH
OOPS SS!!
HE GOT IT!

ゴロ
GARRR
ビターン
GYA


I-IDE, Y-YOU TOUCHED THE NET...
HA HA HA..

わあああ
GAME WON BY MARUO. COUNT: 4 - 0
H-HEY, IDE!! WHAT'RE YOU DO-INGGG-GG!!
あはは
あはは


ザワ
ザワ
Stupid
ザワ
AYEYAIYAI... HE TRIED TOO HARD TO GET IT!!

あはは
HAHA, IDE REALLY IS FULL OF FUN!!
I'M SO GLAD I CAME HERE TO WATCH!!
DID YOU SEE THAT?!

A-ARE YOU OKAY?
YEAH, THANKS

はは
THAT REALLY IS QUITE A SIGHT...NO WONDER HE'S SO FUN.

GOSH, YOU REALLY ARE STRONG!
You got me!
BUT JUST SO YOU KNOW, I'M JUST GETTING STARTED!

DID HE SEE IT COMING?
HIS RESPONSE JUST NOW. IT WAS RIDICULOUSLY FAST
THAT WAS SO CLOSE, IDE!!
DEFINITELY KEEP THIS ONE!
I MIGHT HAVE THE LEAD, BUT THE MATCH IS JUST GETTING STARTED.

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Baby Steps

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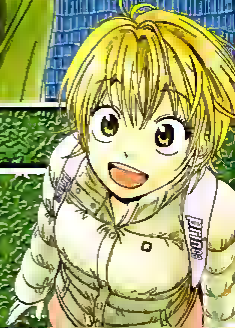
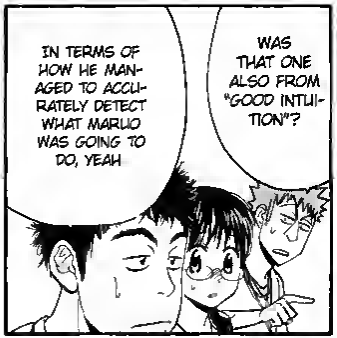
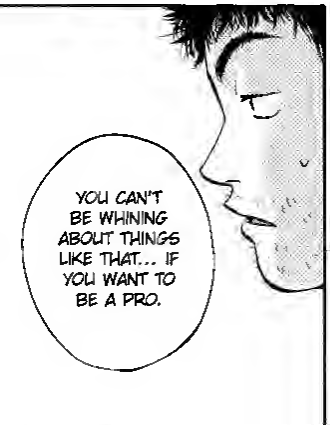


IT'S STILL JUST TWO BREAKS!!
LET'S START BY KEEPING THIS ONE!
IDE- TURN THIS AROUND NO MATTER WHAT!!
MARUO EIICHIRO
IDE YOSHIAKI
4
0


IN TERMS OF HOW HE MANAGED TO ACCURATELY DETECT WHAT MARUO WAS GOING TO DO, YEAH
WAS THAT ONE ALSO FROM "GOOD INTUITION"?

HE'S REALLY SUCH A FLASHY GUY
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE FALL OVER THE NET
WELL, IT RARELY HAPPENS


YOU CAN'T BE WHINING ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT... IF YOU WANT TO BE A PRO.

HMM.... MAYBE.
BUT...

ISN'T EI-CHAN BAD AGAINST KEEN PLAYERS LIKE HIM?
He's pretty fuck-headed.
It feels like he's cheating a bit

HE'S GRASPING THE TIMING OF CHANGE-OF-PACE.
EVEN THE DROP SHOT I THOUGHT I HIT PERFECTLY GOT RETURNED...
IDE-KUN KEEPS ON EXCEEDING MY EXPECTATIONS...
#194: DEVELOPMENT

EVEN THOUGH I HAVE A 4 - 0 LEAD,
I HAVE NO ROOM TO BREATHE.
FOR THIS ONE, GO BACK TO A BEGINNER'S MINDSET...
BY USING WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM PLAYING WITH NACCHAN,
I'LL FIGHT AGAINST THE INSTINCTIVE IDE-KUN!

あっ
ぶっ
THINK BACK ON HOW IDE-KUN'S BEEN PLAYING SO FAR...
ONCE THE GAME STARTS, LOOK, FEEL, AND REACT ACCORDING TO IDE-KUN'S ACTIONS IN FRONT OF ME...
はっ
HA
きゅん

EVEN THOUGH I RESPONDED PRETTY QUICKLY, THE SLICE WAS TOO SHARP...
RGH
IDE, NICE SERVE!!
15 - 0
SO YOU FINALLY CAME TO YOUR SENSES AFTER HITTING THE GROUND?!
おお
おお

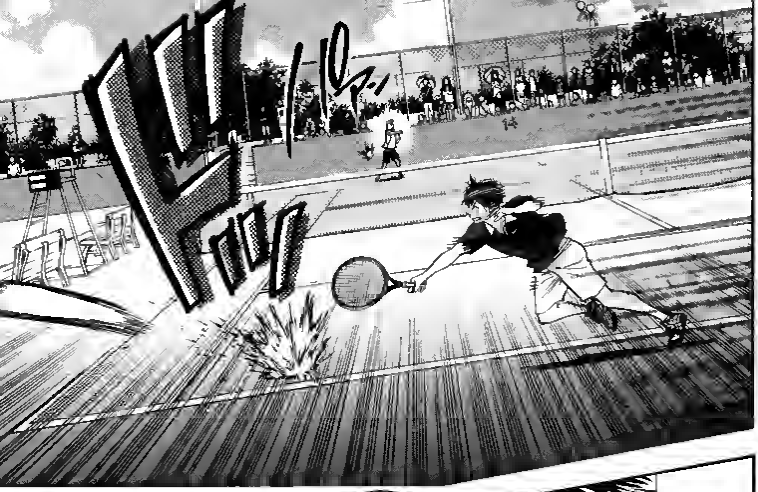
I'VE GOT TO SPEND AS MUCH TIME AS POSSIBLE ON REMEMBERING HOW IDE-KUN PLAYS
I SHOULDN'T GET CAUGHT UP IN IDE-KUN'S GAME WHEN HE'S ON THE RISE.

EVEN THOUGH HE TOOK HIS TIME ON THE PREVIOUS GAME.
HE'S PREPARED ALREADY

VISUALIZE EACH POINT ONE BY ONE...
THINK BACK ON IDE-KUN'S SPORADIC PLAYS.
タッ

IF I KEEP PILING THIS UP LIKE IN MY MATCH WITH NAC-CHAN,
I SHOULD BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND IDE-KUN'S TENNIS LITTLE BY LITTLE.
15 SEC-ONDS
ONCE THE PLAY STARTS, FOCUS ONLY ON THE OPPONENT BEFORE MY EYES.
...A FAST SPIN!!
RYA
I RE-TURNED IT DEEP!!

HA
RGH
AGAIN... HE'S GOING FOR THE ACE!!



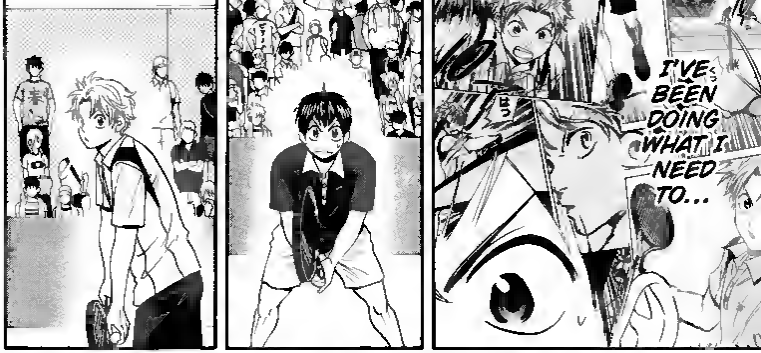
YEAH, IDE! THAT'S IT!!
30 - 0.

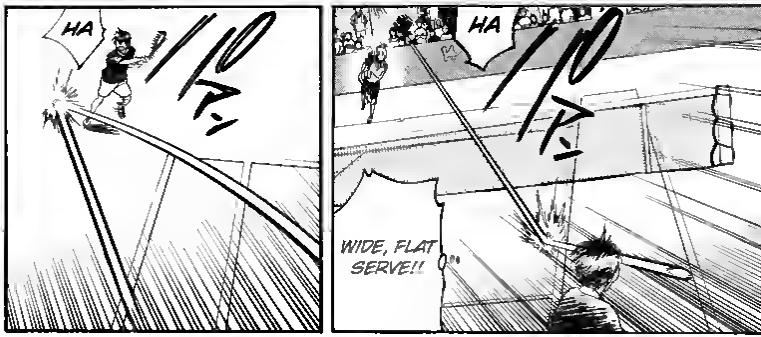
RGH

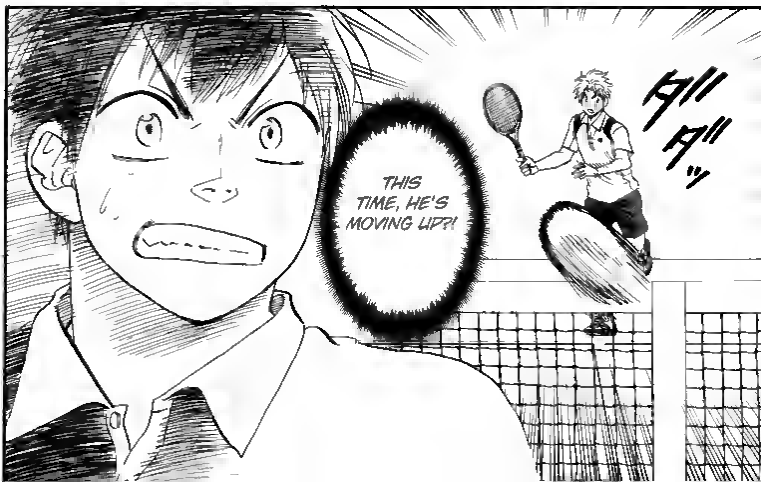
Thwiw
Tick tick
DON'T RUSH. . RETURN GAMES ARE MEANT TO BE HARD ANYWAY.

THE SHOTS THAT WERE OFF BY A LITTLE BIT UNTIL NOW ARE STARTING TO GO IN ONE AFTER ANOTHER.

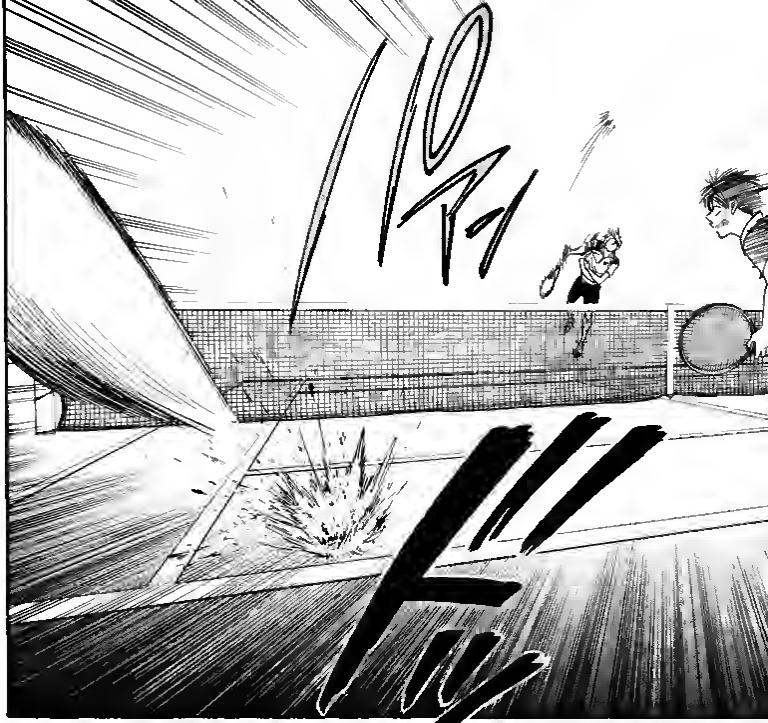
BUT MY RESPONSES WERE PRETTY GOOD, TOO.
IDE-KUN'S ATTACKS ARE JUST TOO TOUGH.

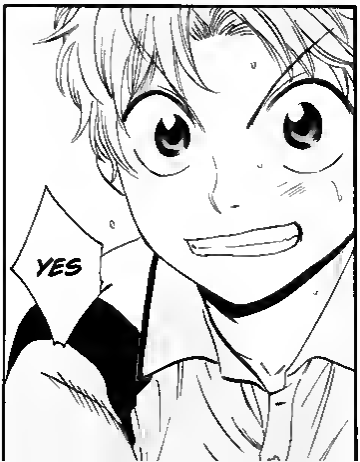

I'VE BEEN DOING WHAT I NEED TO...


HA
HA
WIDE, FLAT SERVE!!


THIS TIME, HE'S MOVING UP?!

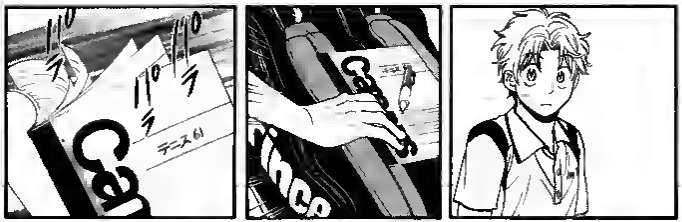
おお
40 - 0
OKAY, ONE MORE AND KEEP!!
RGH
HA
RGH


HA
HI


YES

RGH

GAME, IDE. COUNT: 4 - 1, MARUO LEAD.
ALL RIGHT, THIS IS WHERE HIS TRUE STRENGTH STARTS TO SHINE!!
SHOW US AN EPIC COME-BACK!!
YOSHI~ NICE KEEP!!
THAT'S MORE LIKE IT, IDE!!
IT'S GETTING MORE AND MORE IN-TERESTING!!


Campus
テニス

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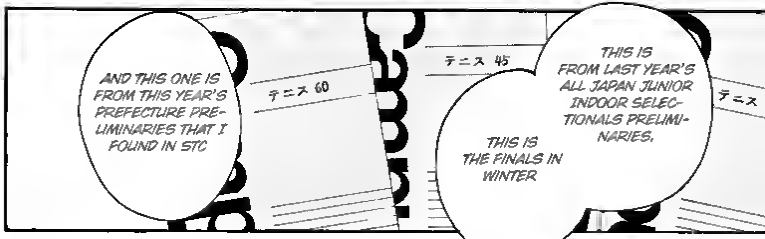
ガヤ
YEAH, I WONDER WHAT'S IN THEM?
OH? WHAT THE HECK? HE RAN BACK AND STARTED LOOKING AT HIS NOTES.

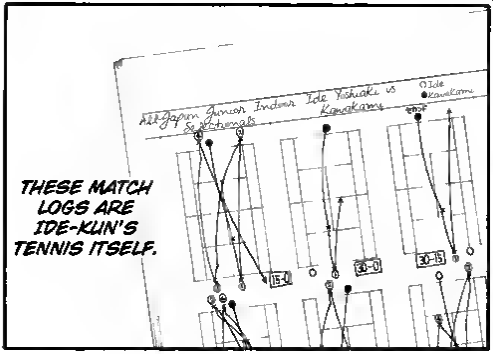
I KNEW IT. LOOKING BACK AT MY NOTES HELPS ME REMEMBER MY PREVIOUS GAMES MUCH MORE CLEARLY.
Campus

BUT BEFORE THAT, THE LATEST DATA.
カチカチ

30-15
30-0
15-0
カキカキカキ
カキカキカキ
カキカキカキ
OKAY. .
THAT'S GOOD FOR NOW
HE MADE A PERFECT KEEP JUST NOW, BUT MY REACTIONS ARE GETTING BETTER
THAT MEANS,
IT'S HIGHLY LIKELY THAT I'LL BE ABLE TO RESPOND BETTER IF I INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF DATA IN MY HEAD TO BETTER UNDERSTAND IDE-KUN

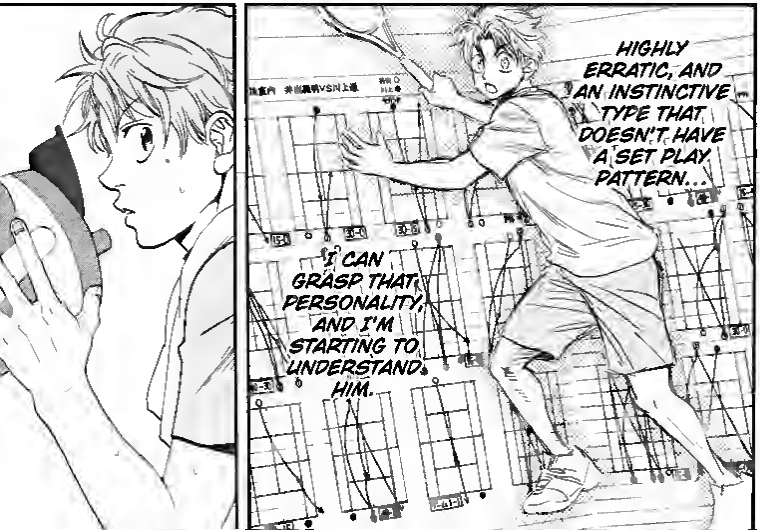
WOW!
HEY, LOOK AT WHAT'S INSIDE HIS RACKET CASE!!
ゴソ
カサ
THIS ISN'T THE ONLY DATA I HAVE ON IDE-KUN.


AND THIS ONE IS FROM THIS YEAR'S PREFECTURE PRELIMINARIES THAT I FOUND IN STC
テニス 60
テニス 45
THIS IS THE FINALS IN WINTER
THIS IS FROM LAST YEAR'S ALL JAPAN JUNIOR INDOOR SELECTIONALS PRELIMINARIES.
テニス


THESE MATCH LOGS ARE IDE-KUN'S TENNIS ITSELF.
All-Japan Junior Indoor Ide Yukiaki vs Kawakami Seishonenbu
Ide
Kawakami
15-0
30-0
30-15

THANK GOODNESS I BROUGHT SO MANY

IDE-KUN'S PLAYS KEEP FLOWING INTO MY HEAD.
IT'S MUCH EASIER TO VISUALIZE IDE-KUN'S TENNIS IN MY HEAD WHILE LOOKING AT THESE.


I CAN GRASP THAT PERSONALITY, AND I'M STARTING TO UNDERSTAND HIM.
HIGHLY ERRATIC, AND AN INSTINCTIVE TYPE THAT DOESN'T HAVE A SET PLAY PATTERN...

Campus

MARUO-KUN!
YES?
W-WHAT ABOUT THE CALL?
I CALLED OUT AL-READY.
EH?!
YOUR 90 SECONDS ARE UP YOU GET A WARNING, TOO
I-I'M SORRY!!
REALLY, WHAT'S WRONG? BOTH OF YOU...
AH... YOU'RE RIGHT!

HAHA
HMM... I THOUGHT HE WAS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT,
BUT MAYBE WE'VE GOT SOME THINGS IN COMMON?
BUT IT'S GOOD THAT I WAS ABLE TO USE AS MUCH TIME AS I CAN
THAT WAS CLOSE ..
I'VE DEFINITELY GOT TO KEEP THIS IF I'M TO HANG ONTO THIS SET!!

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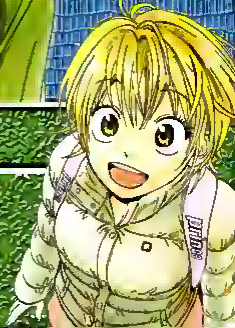


I'VE VISUALIZE IDE-KUN'S DATA IN MY HEAD. UNTIL THE GAME STARTS...
ONCE WE START PLAYING,
FOCUS ONLY ON IDE-KUN IN FRONT OF ME!!
HA

HA
HERE COMES, DOWN THE LINE!!
TAP

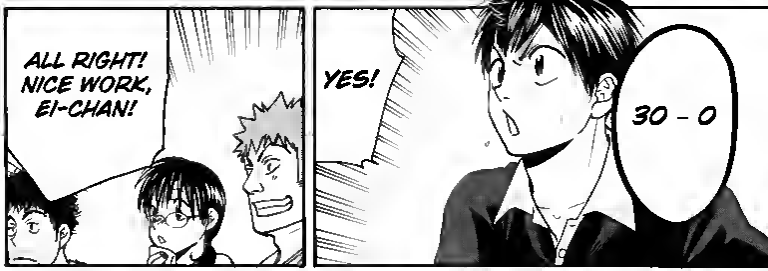
HA
!

YES!
HA

15 - 0.
WOW... THEY'RE BOTH GOING FOR INCREDIBLE SHOTS.
IT'S GOTTEN REALLY HIGH LEVEL.
THAT'S STRANGE.
THAT RETURN SHOULD'VE BEEN IT...
IDE-KUN HITS DOWN THE LINE REGARDLESS OF MY SHOT WITHOUT CONSIDERING THE RISKS.
Tick tick
BECAUSE I KEPT REPLAYING THAT DATA OVER AND OVER, IT REMAINED SOLID IN MY HEAD.

HA
IT'S WORKING...
THIS FLAT SERVE... BECAUSE IDE-KUN'S WHIMSICAL, YOU DON'T KNOW HOW HE'S GOING TO RETURN.
WHICH LETS ME POSITION MYSELF QUICKLY!
BUT IF I HAVE SOME IMAGES OF HOW IDE-KUN'S BEEN RETURNING MY FLATS, I CAN NARROW DOWN THE EXPECTATIONS, SO I'LL BE ABLE TO REACT FASTER.
タッ

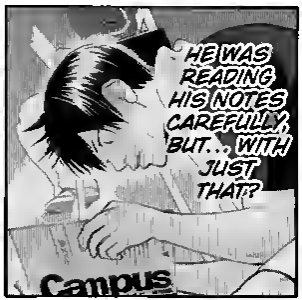
HA
ドッ
ハーハー


ALL RIGHT! NICE WORK, EI-CHAN!
YES!
30 - 0

THERE'S NO WAY HIS MOVEMENTS COULD SUDDENLY GET FASTER....
HA
ハーハー
AGAIN... WHAT IS THIS?

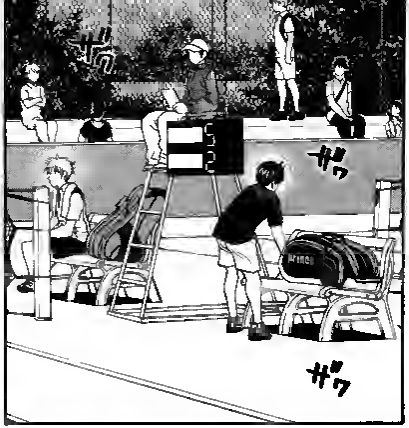
40 - 0.
I SEE...
HE'S REACTING FASTER.

scratch
BUT, REGARD-LESS OF THAT..
scratch
THIS IS BAD.


HE WAS READING HIS NOTES CAREFULLY, BUT... WITH JUST THAT??
Campus

HA
GAME WON BY MARUO. COUNT: 5 – 1
YES!
IT'S MARUO'S KEEP AGAIN!
YES, YES... YOU'RE DOING WELL!

I SOMEHOW MANAGED TO MAINTAIN THE ADVANTAGE OF MY SERVES,
BUT I STILL HAVE NO ROOM TO RELAX.
GAME WON BY IDE. COUNT 5 – 2. MARUO LEAD.
YEAH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NICE, IDE! YOU STARTED KEEPING YOUR GAME WITHOUT A SWEAT!!
YOU'RE FINALLY PLAYING LIKE YOU NORMALLY DO!!
GO FOR THE COME-BACK!!

IF HE BREAKS, THE MOMEN-TUM OF THE GAME WILL TURN COM-PLETELY IN HIS FAVOR.
PAH
EVEN THOUGH I'M STRUGGLING TO KEEP MINE, HE'S KEEPING HIS WITHOUT A PROBLEM..

ゴクゴク

カキカキカキカキカキ
I'VE GOT TO TAKE THE FIRST SET BEFORE THIS BECOMES A CLOSE MATCH!!

ANYWAY, I'VE GOT TO PACK AS MUCH DATA IN MY HEAD AS POSSI-BLE AND KEEP THIS.

DON FLAT SHOTS GOT TO BE DATATT...
UMM... HOW WAS IT?
IF HE STARTS HIS MOVES QUICKER, THE TIMING GETS QUICKER TOO,
CRAP...
SO I'VE GOT TO READ- JUST MY TIMING.
HEAD
FIRST SET, GAME 8.
YOU KNOW... THESE TWO ARE PRETTY FUNNY.

15 - 0.
YES!
I GOT THE CRUCIAL FIRST POINT!!

IN TERMS OF HIS SHOTS, THE OVERALL TIMING GOT FASTER BY AN INSTANT.
IN GENERAL, HIS DEFENSIVE AREA HAS INCREASED BY ABOUT ONE STRIDE ON BOTH SIDES..
110キン
THEN, GO FOR A
DATT!!
RGH
NO MATTER WHAT I DO, HE COUNTERS IT REALLY QUICKLY.
30 - 30.

HA
TCH
HONESTLY... WHAT IS THIS GUY?!

40 - 30
WOW!! IT'S MARUO'S SET POINT ALREADY!!
TAKE HIM BY SURPRISE WITH A SERVE & VOLLEY!!

IT'S TOUGH IF A GOOD SERVE GOES IN..
CAN I AT LEAST TRY TO READ THE TYPE OF SPIN?
IF I DON'T TAKE THIS SET ON THE NEXT POINT, IT'S GOING TO BE TROUBLE-SOME...
BEFORE THIS BE-COMES A CLOSE MATCH...
BEFORE HE COMES UP WITH AN-OTHER COUN-TER..
I'VE GOT TO DEFINITELY FINISH IT
WITH THIS ONE POINT!!

...DAH!!
...A PER-FECT FIRST SERVE!!
HIS FIRST DOWN-THE-LINE RISING SHOT?!
RGH
!!

FIRST SET WON BY MARUO. COUNT: 6 – 2.
おお
WOW~!! A-AMAZ-ING
おおっ
WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT RALLY!!

ザワ
AND MARUO TOOK THE FIRST SET!!
ザワ
ザワ
ザワ

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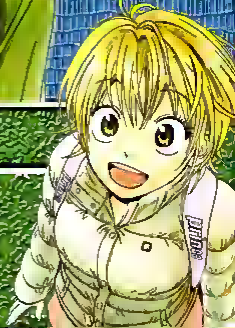
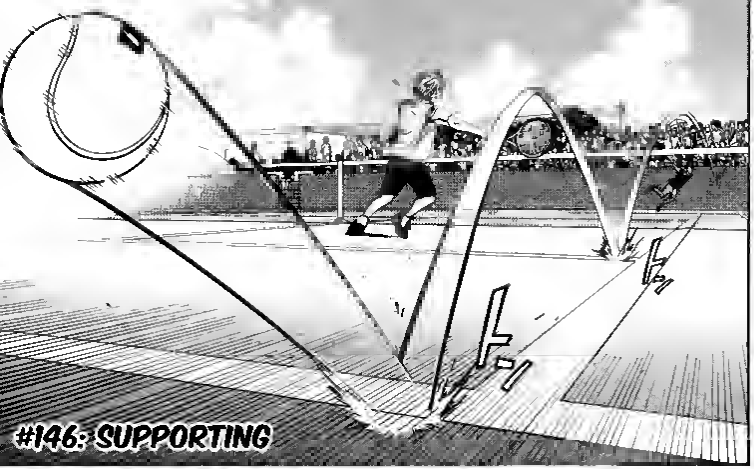
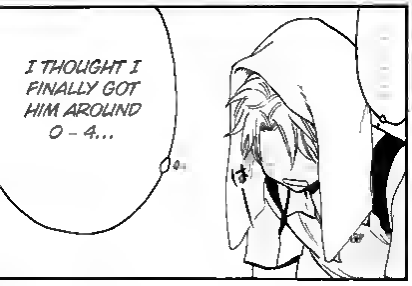


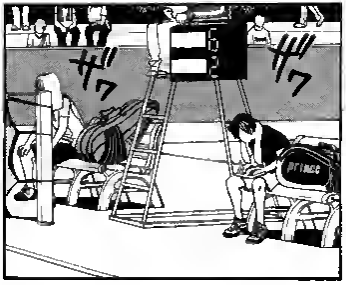

#146: SUPPORTING

FIRST SET WON BY MARUO
COUNT: 6 – 2!
32 井出 義明

YES!! EI-CHAN GOT THE FIRST SET!!
AND WITH A HUGE GAP, TOO!!
YES ...
GRIP
YESSSSS!!
I PULLED THROUGH!!

I SOMEHOW CLEARED THE FIRST CHECK-POINT!!
NO WAY?! THE NO SEEDER GOT THE FIRST SET?!
HE WAS PUSHING BACK IDE'S ATTACKS
YEAH, BUT HE'S PRETTY GOOD!!

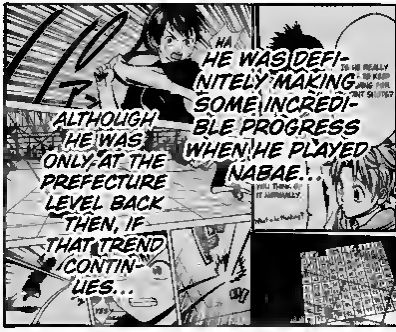

I THOUGHT I FINALLY GOT HIM AROUND 0 - 4...



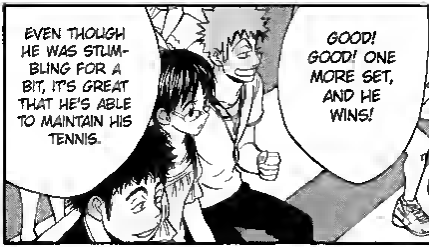
EVEN THOUGH I HAD HIM WITHIN MY REACH,
I COULDN'T CATCH UP.
BUT FROM THE MOMENT HE PULLED OUT HIS NOTES,
HIS REACTIONS GOT QUICKER AND IT'S BEEN HARDER TO GRASP THE RIGHT TIMING.

I GUESS HE WOULD REACH THE NATIONAL LEVEL.

IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE FOR HIS MOVEMENTS TO IMPROVE THAT MUCH DURING THE GAME?
... WAIT ...


HA
HE WAS DEFINITELY MAKING SOME INCREDIBLE PROGRESS WHEN HE PLAYED NABAE...
ALTHOUGH HE WAS ONLY AT THE PREFECTURE LEVEL BACK THEN, IF THAT TREND CONTINUES...

ALL HIS HARD WORK SO FAR IS COMING TO FRUITION.
HAVING HIM PLAY NACCHAN REALLY HELPED.


EVEN THOUGH HE WAS STUMBLING FOR A BIT, IT'S GREAT THAT HE'S ABLE TO MAINTAIN HIS TENNIS.
GOOD! GOOD! ONE MORE SET, AND HE WINS!

IT HELPED HIM PROVE THAT IT'S NOT AN OPPONENT HE CAN'T BEAT.

INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF IDE-KUN'S DATA I HAVE STORED IN MY HEAD EVEN MORE
TO DO THAT, FIRST...
I HAVE TO START MY MOVES EVEN QUICKER.
15-0
40
BUT THE REAL TROUBLE STARTS FROM HERE.
SINCE HE'S GRASPING MY TIMING MORE AND MORE,
AT THE END, KEEPING MY GAME WAS ALL I COULD MANAGE, LET ALONE A BREAK
ッッ!!
BUT IN ORDER TO WIN, I'VE GOT TO BREAK AGAINST IDE-KUN SOMEWHERE ..
IN ADDITION TO THAT...
ONCE HE GRASPS THE TIMING OF CHANGE-OF-PACE, GIVE UP ON USING THAT PATTERN
AND KEEP ON CHALLENGING HIM WITH NEW PATTERNS.

SINCE I GOT THE FIRST SET,
I SHOULD KEEP TESTING THOSE IN THE SECOND!
ALTHOUGH I BARELY HAVE ONE NOTEBOOK WORTH OF PATTERNS I'M CONFIDENT IN,
snd
THEORETICALLY, THERE'S AN INFINITE NUMBER OF PATTERNS I COULD USE.
MARUO EIICHIRO
60
IDE YOSHIAKI
20

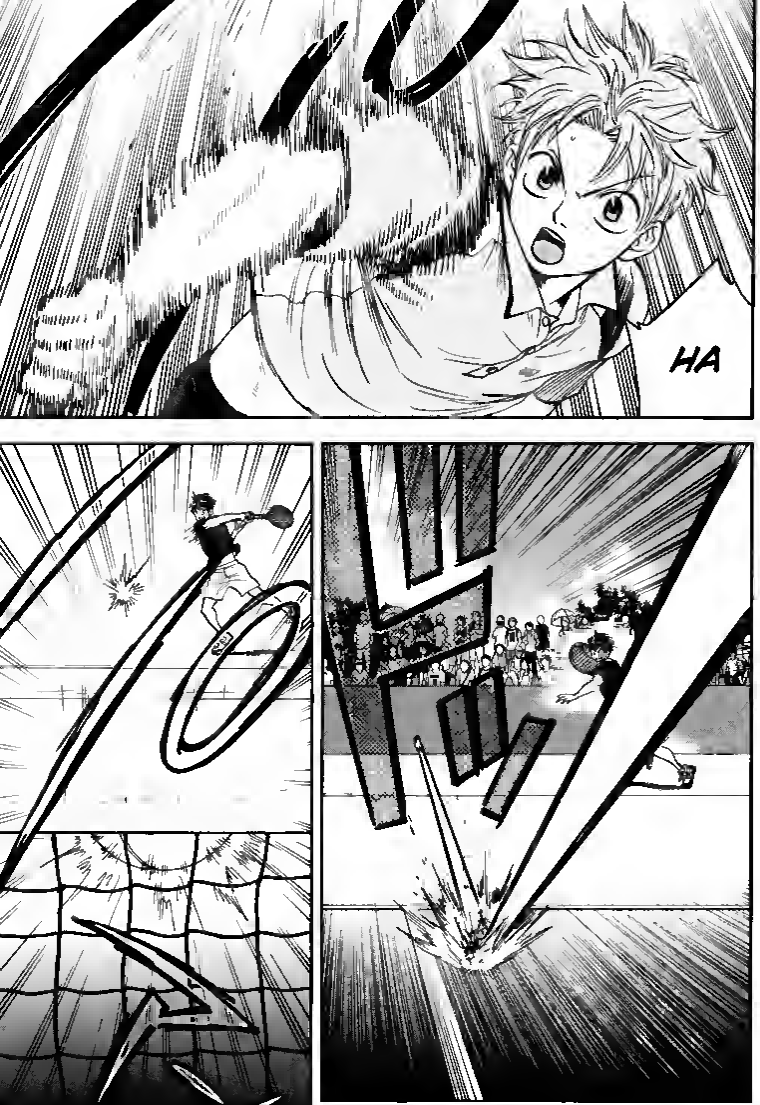
RYA
FAST!!
IF I LAND A GOOD SERVE, IT'LL RESTRICT THE SHOTS HE COULD USE FOR CHANG-ING THE PACE...

SO I CAN KEEP GOING!!
DGH!
ドッ

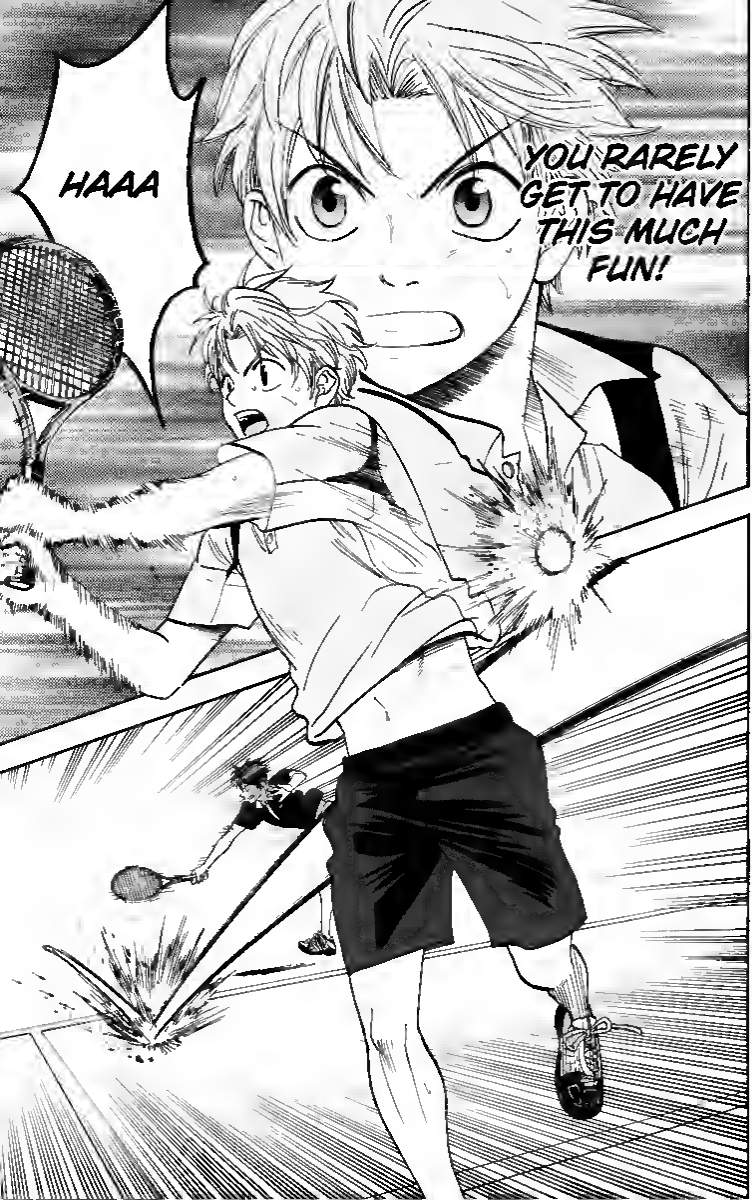
ヤヤ

YEAH, IDE! NICE SHOT!!
15 - 0.
KEEP IT UP!!

AND I DON'T MIND SECOND SETS AFTER LOSING THE FIRST.
THEY'LL ALL CHEER FOR ME WITH ALL THEIR MIGHT SINCE I CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE.


HA

30 - 0.
YES!!
カッ
THAT'S WHY IF I TAKE A POINT...
EVERYONE CONGRATULATES ME FROM THE BOTTOM OF THEIR HEARTS.
ゴゴゴ
おしあ
NICE SERVE, YOSHI!!
YEAH!!
.....

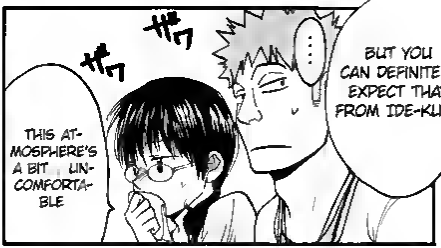

HAAA
YOU RARELY GET TO HAVE THIS MUCH FUN!

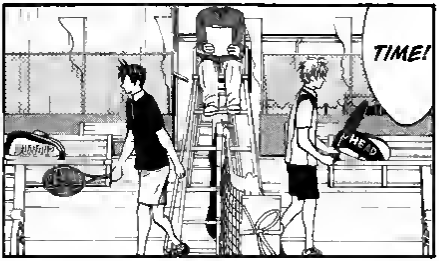
YOUR COME-BACK STARTS HERE!!

IT'LL BE REALLY COOL IF HE ACTUALLY MAKES A COMEBACK.

NICE KEEP!
GAME, IDE.. COUNT: 1 - 0. SECOND SET.
LET'S BREAK THE NEXT ONE!!

INPUT NEW DATA EVERY TIME WE CHANGE COURT.


THIS AT-MOSPHERE'S A BIT UN-COMFORTA-BLE
BUT YOU CAN DEFINITELY EXPECT THAT FROM IDE-KUN~

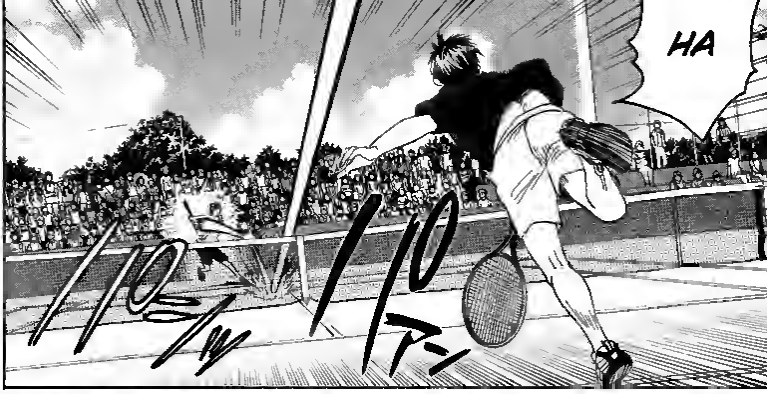

TIME!

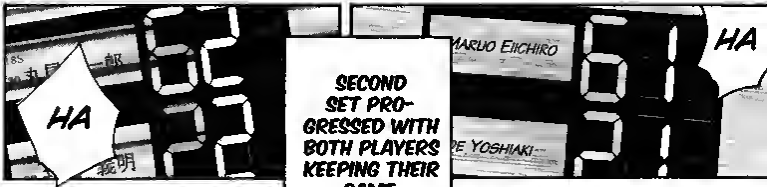
HA
ONCE THE GAME STARTS...
FOCUS ON THE OPPONENT!!
IF I GET THE UPPER HAND WITH THE SERVE,
CHANGE THE PACE AND GO FOR THE TIGHT SPOT
AIM FOR THE OPEN SPACE..
IF HE LOSES BALANCE..
RGH

15 - 0.
YEAH
WITH 1164 CONTROL!!
HA
OHH!! MARUO REALLY IS GOOD!!
HE'S GOT INCREDIBLE CONTROL.
FOR THIS SHORT CROSS...
HA

DATT
ドゥッ
わぁっ
15 - 15
ﾋﾞｸ!?

YES!! IDE, TAKE THE LEAD!!
YOU'RE DOING GREAT ON THE RETURN!!
W-WHAT IS THIS...? HE JUST EARNED ONE POINT.
CONCEN-TRATE...!





SECOND SET PROGRESSED WITH BOTH PLAYERS KEEPING THEIR GAME.

GAME, IDE. COUNT: 3 - 2. IDE LEAD. SECOND SET.
AND MAINTAINED AN OVERWHELMING KEEP WITH A SPECTACULAR CROWD BACKING HIM UP.
IN CONTRAST TO IDE, WHO LANDED ALL HIS SHOTS WITH A FULL SWING,
DESPITE HANGING ON THE EDGE,

OUT! 30 – 30.
IN THE MIDST OF THIS STALE-MATE.
EIICHIRO STRUGGLED TO KEEP HIS.
AS HE KEPT VARY-ING HIS TIMING
……
MY AT-TACKS ARE GOING WHERE I WANT,
AND CHANGE-O F-PACE IS WORKING TOO.
THEN WHY... WHY DO I FEEL SO PINNED DOWN?

AND ONTO GAME 8 OF THE SECOND SET.
Maruo Eiichiro
Ide Yoshiaki
わあああ
Phew
prince
わあああ
HUH? THOSE CHEERS...
ARE THEY COMING FROM EI-CHAN'S COURT?

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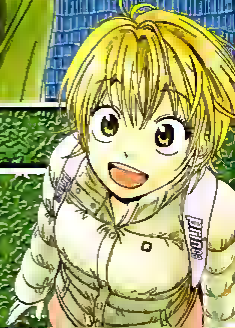
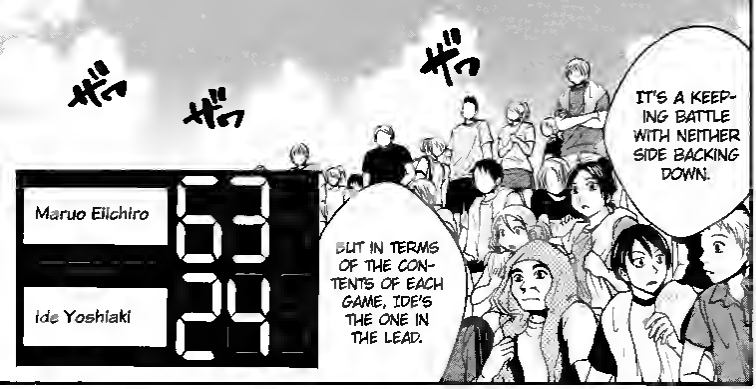
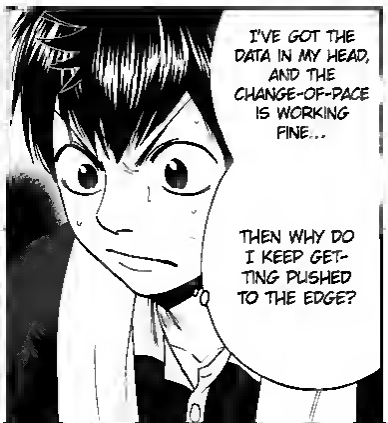
Baby Steps

RAWs: Share
Cleaner: Stark E. JZar
Translator: Ruggia
Typesetter: CroN
Proofreader: Georgi
Q-Checker: LordLestat

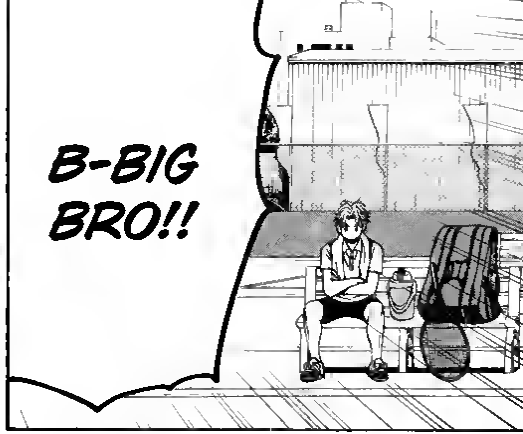


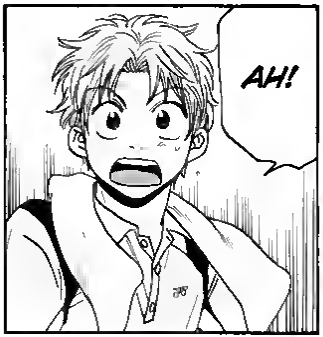




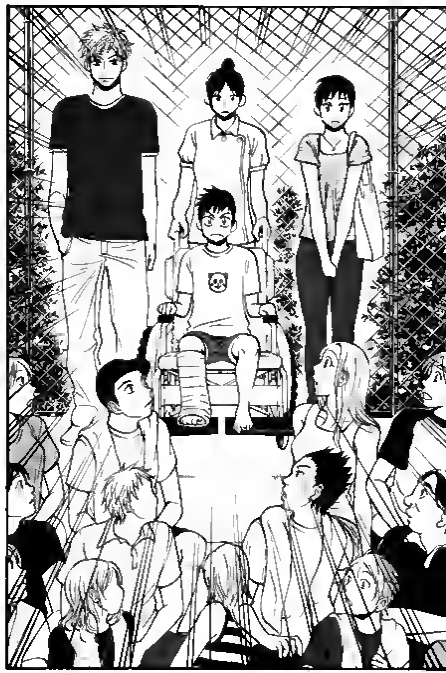
#147: INVISIBLE ENEMY

BIG BRO?
DID SOME-ONE'S LITTLE BROTHER COME TO WATCH?


B-BIG BRO!!


AH!

?



I DID MY BEST ON THE SURGERY AS PROMISED!!
SO... SO YOU DEFINITELY HAVE TO WIN!!

YOU'RE RIGHT! HE'S ON A WHEELCHAIR AND THERE'S A NURSE NEXT TO HIM, TOO.
REALLY..?! WHERE, WHERE?

THE KID YOSHI TOOK CARE OF AT THE COST OF SACRIFICING HIS MATCH.
HEY... DON'T TELL ME THAT'S THE KID WHO HAD THE ACCIDENT BEFORE THE GAME.

HMMM, I SEE. THAT SOUNDS TOTALLY LIKE YOSHI.
WHEN I SAID I DON'T WANT SURGERY, HE TOLD ME "I'LL WIN MY MATCH, SO DON'T YOU LOSE TO THE SURGERY".

HMM? OH...
HEY I'M HIS FRIEND CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT THE PROMISE YOU MADE WITH HIM?
I'M SORRY ABOUT MY KID'S STUBBORNNESS...
WE'LL GO BACK AS SOON AS THE MATCH IS OVER.

わあああ
……
HE CAME TO WATCH ON A WHEEL-CHAIR?
WOW, IT FEELS LIKE I'M REALLY WATCHING A MOVIE!!
DID YOU HEAR THAT? HE PROMISED THE INJURED KID TO WIN.
TIME!
IDE!! YOU CAN'T LOSE ANYMORE!!
I'M REALLY GETTING PUMPED UP!!

I CAN'T MAKE A FOOL OF MYSELF ANYMORE...
EVEN THOUGH I'M LOSING ..
IT'S GETTING EVEN MORE UNCOMFORTABLE AROUND HERE
LIKE OKADA-KUN SAID, EVERYTHING KEEPS ON FEEDING IDE-KUN'S STORY
BUT THANK GOODNESS THAT THE KID'S ALL RIGHT...

I'M SURE PEOPLE LIKE IDE-KUN ARE REALLY FIT TO BE PROS.
I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY EVERYONE WANTS TO CHEER FOR IDE-KUN...
BUT...

I WANT TO WIN NO MATTER WHAT!!
ESPECIALLY BECAUSE HE'S SUCH A PERSON...

BEING A PROFESSIONAL PLAYER MEANS WINNING AGAINST SUCH PEOPLE...
THAT'S WHAT I'VE LEARNED FROM THE VARIOUS PROS OR PRO-CANDIDATES I'VE MET SO FAR...

...HERE I GO!!
startle
HA
HIS RESPONSE IS QUICK!!

IF I DON'T DECIDE THIS HERE...
I'M NOT A MAN!!

あの時から

DON'T YOU LOSE, BIG-BRO!!
YOU TOO, MARUO!!
THAT'S IT, IDE!! YOU'RE A MAN WHO ALWAYS SUCCEEDS IN WHAT'S IMPORTANT!!
YOU'RE SO COOL, IDE-KUN!!
YOU'RE FIT TO BE THE HERO!!
HA

HA
IT'S A FLAT SERVE, SO CAN'T BE HELPED.
FOR MY SECOND, DON'T BE INTIMIDATED AND..
RGH
DOUBLE FAULT. 0 - 30
IDE, LET'S TAKE THIS!!
NO WORRIES, MARUO!!

WHAT AM I DOING!!? DOUBLE FAULT AT SUCH AN IMPORTANT MOMENT...
THIS IS THE THIRD DOUBLE FAULT TODAY, BUT IT'S THE FIRST TIME THAT IT COULD BE CRITICAL.
EVEN THOUGH THEIR SKILLS DON'T SEEM THAT FAR APART...
WHY DOES HE KEEP FALTERING IN TOUGH SITUATIONS?
I'M SURE THE POWER OF THE CROWD'S CHEERS IS MUCH GREATER THAN IT SEEMS.
SO FAR, THERE HASN'T BEEN A HUGE GAP IN SCORE BECAUSE MARUO'S BEEN ABLE TO KEEP HIS GAMES,
BUT I'M SURE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THAT IT'S BETTER TO HAVE THE AUDIENCE ON YOUR SIDE IF YOUR STRENGTHS ARE EQUAL
HOME GAMES DEFINITELY HAVE A HIGHER RATE OF VICTORY IN SOCCER OR BASEBALL.
WHEN A PERSON GETS ENCOURAGED OR FEELS HAPPINESS, HIS BRAIN RELEASES A STIMULANT CALLED DOPAMINE.
ONCE THAT HAPPENS, HE KEEPS THINKING "I WANT TO FEEL THAT ONE MORE TIME", WHICH RAISES HIS MOTIVATION AND IMPROVES HIS PERFORMANCE.
YOU DON'T FEEL AS MUCH FATIGUE EITHER.

IN CONTRAST, MARUO'S PLAYING IN AN AWAY SITUATION, SO IT'S EASY TO GET INTIMIDATED BY THE ATMOSPHERE. HIS MOVEMENTS GET TOO STIFF, AND HIS PERFORMANCE GETS POORER. HE GETS TIRED QUICKER, TOO.
I'M SURE EI-CHAN'S TRYING TO BE AS COOL AS HE CAN BE ON THIS ONE,
BUT HE'S A GOOD GUY AT HEART, SO IT MUST BE TOUGH FOR HIM.
MARUO'S BEEN HANGING ON SO FAR BECAUSE HE'S BEEN TACKLING THIS WITH AN UNPARALLELED SOURCE OF MOTIVATION,
BUT YOU CAN'T ESCAPE FROM THIS HANDICAP OF FIGHTING AN OPPONENT WHO GETS BETTER AND BETTER AFTER EACH POINT.
THESE SORTS OF THINGS TAKE TIME
TO MAKE THE EFFECT SHOW.

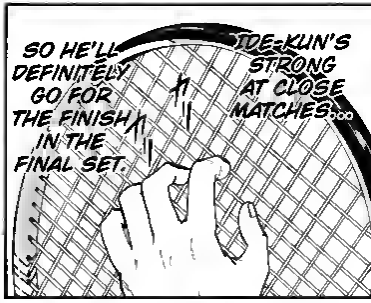
HA
FIRST SERVE AFTER A DOUBLE FAULT SHOULD BE STRONG-WILLED!!
THE REASON I LOST THE FIRST SET WASN'T BECAUSE MY CONDITION WAS BAD,
FUU
BUT... I'VE FOUGHT GUYS STRONGER THAN ME NUMEROUS TIMES, AND I'VE WON.
IT'S 'CAUSE YOU'RE STRONG!!

ALTHOUGH EVERYONE SAYS TENNIS IS A LONELY SPORT,
WHENEVER I WAS IN TROUBLE, PEOPLE AROUND ME ALWAYS SUPPORTED ME...
I DON'T BELIEVE THAT.
'CAUSE I'VE BEEN ABLE TO COME THIS FAR THANKS TO EVERYONE PUSHING MY BACK.

HA
おおお
HERE IT IS!!
0 - 40
I-IT'S FINALLY IDE'S BREAK POINT!

DON'T GET INTIMI-DATED!!

BUT IT'S NOT LIKE OUR DIFFERENCE IN SKILLS OR STRENGTH IS BIG ENOUGH FOR ME TO LOSE MY SERVE GAME WITH ZERO POINTS.
IDE-KUN'S RIDING THE WAVE OF THIS CURRENT SITUATION...


SO HE'LL DEFINITELY GO FOR THE FINISH IN THE FINAL SET.
IDE-KUN'S STRONG AT CLOSE MATCHES...

FOCUS ONLY ON THE GAME!!
DON'T BE INTIMIDATED BY THE SITUATION...
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ドキ
ドキ

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Baby Steps

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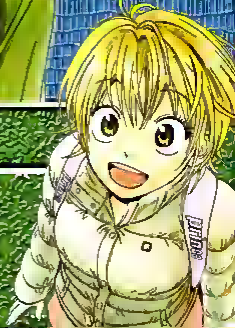
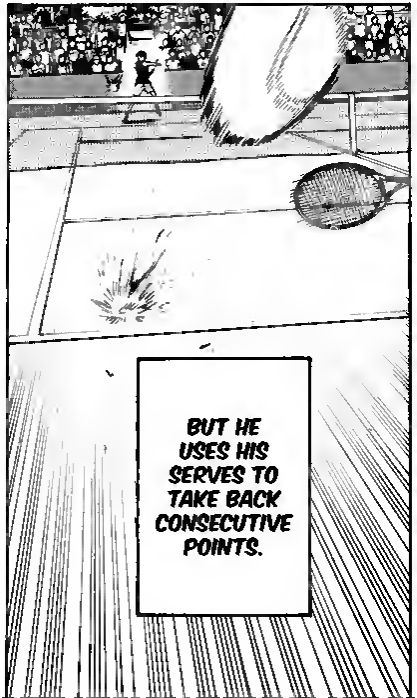
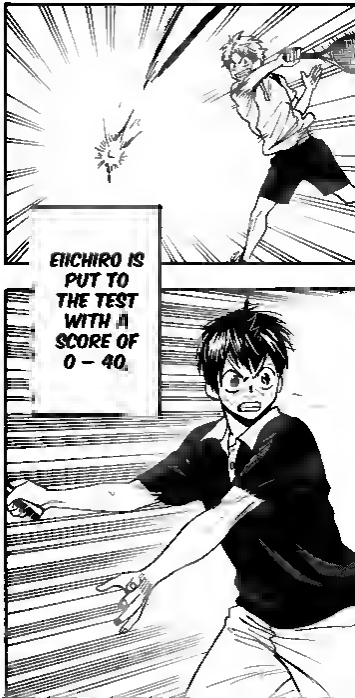


#148: RECOGNIZING THE CURRENT SITUATION
HA

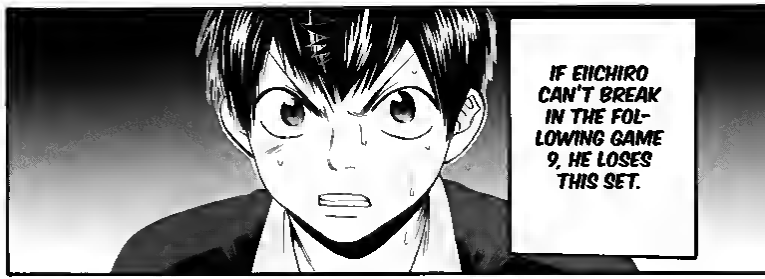
SECOND SET,
GAME 8,
3 – 4.


BUT HE
USES HIS
SERVES TO
TAKE BACK
CONSECUTIVE
POINTS.


EIICHIRO IS
PUT TO
THE TEST
WITH A
SCORE OF
0 – 40.

30 – 40
HOW-
EVER,
HA

GAME, IDE. 5 – 3. SECOND SET.
FINALLY!! HE'S FINALLY SHOWING HIS TRUE STRENGTHS!!
HE FAILS TO CATCH UP AND ALLOWS THE BREAK ON THIS GAME.
THE MAN WHO ALWAYS ANSWERS TO OUR CALL!!

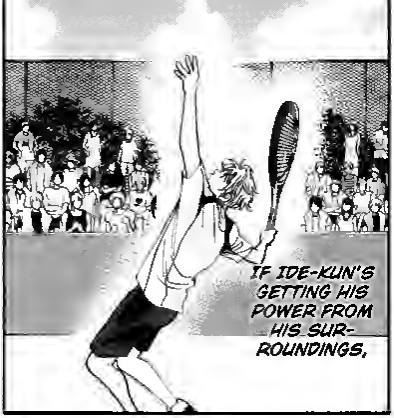

IF EIICHIRO CAN'T BREAK IN THE FOLLOWING GAME 9, HE LOSES THIS SET.

AS IDE TAKES ADVANTAGE OF HIS SERVES TO STEER THE GAME INTO HIS FAVOR.

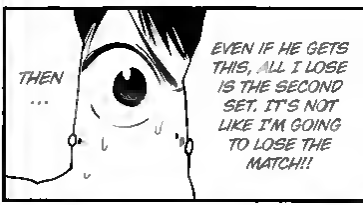
30 – 0.
THE HEAT OF THE CROWD ON COURT NO.14 REACHES THAT DAY'S CLIMAX.
YEAHHH
IT'S HIS SERVE, SO OF COURSE HE'LL BE IN THE LEAD!
THAT'S IT, IDE!!
G...
GO, MARUO-KUN!!
OH, IS IT MARUO'S GIRL-FRIEND?
SHE'S CUTE.
D-DON'T LOSE, EI-CHAN!!
IN THE MIDST OF ALL THAT, EIICHIRO STRUGGLED TO FIND AN ANSWER ALL BY HIMSELF.

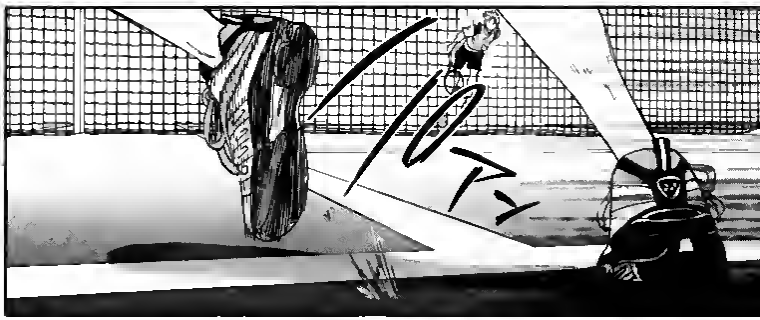
DRAWING STRENGTH FROM THE HOPES OF PEOPLE SUPPORTING HIM,
IDE-KUN'S PLAYING EVEN BETTER THAN USUAL.
BUT EVEN SO, I SHOULDN'T BE FALLING THIS FAR BEHIND...
IDE-KUN'S DEFINITELY STRONG...
BUT IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO MAKE ME FEEL COMPLETELY HOPELESS ON MY RETURN GAME.
THEN WHY...
I FEEL I'VE BEEN ABLE TO PLAY PRETTY WELL WITHOUT GETTING AFFECTED.
IT'S TOUGH TO PLAY IN FRONT OF A LARGE CROWD, AND THE DRAMATIC TURN OF EVENTS IS MAKING ME UNEASY, BUT

40 – 0.
SERVICE ACE!!
FINISH THE NEXT ONE WITH ONE SHOT!!
HE WAS PROBA-BLY...
GOING FOR THE LINE ON THAT.
THIS IS IDE-KUN'S POWER THAT NABAE-KUN'S BEEN TALKING ABOUT.
IT'S HIS OWN SPECIAL ABILITY, LIKE TAKU-MA-SAN'S OR ARAYA-KUN'S PHYSICAL ABILITY, THAT I DON'T HAVE.
WHAT CAN I DO TO OVER-COME THIS?
Tick tack
...BUT SINCE IT'S NOT CLEARLY VISIBLE LIKE PHYSICAL POWER, I DON'T REALLY KNOW!!


IF IDE-KUN'S GETTING HIS POWER FROM HIS SUR-ROUNDINGS,

CRAP... DON'T BE WEAK!


THEN ...
EVEN IF HE GETS THIS, ALL I LOSE IS THE SECOND SET. IT'S NOT LIKE I'M GOING TO LOSE THE MATCH!!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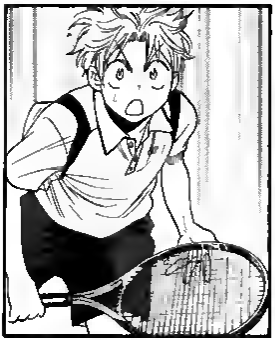


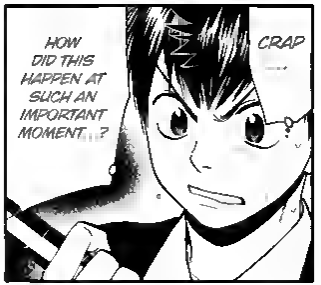
I'VE GOT TO HIT SOMETHING REALLY POWER-FUL THAT'LL SILENCE THIS ENTIRE CROWD WITH...

HA
ONE BLOW!!
GO!!

RGH
H-HE GOT IT!!

HUH?!
ネルヘ
14
AH...
MY SWEAT... MADE MY GRIP...!!

あぁ
SET COUNT IS BACK TO EVEN AT 1 ALL!!
SHOW US YOUR STRENGTH ON THE FINAL SET, TOO!!
ハァ
あ


HOW DID THIS HAPPEN AT SUCH AN IMPORTANT MOMENT...?
CRAP...

E-EXCUSE ME, THE BALL...

SHOOT!!
SECOND SET WON BY IDE. COUNT: 6 - 3.
YES!!
わ
あ
あ

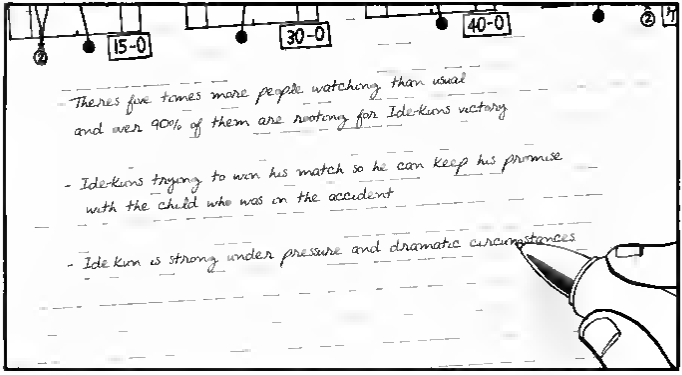
NABAE KUN?!
Woah
AH .. ISN'T THAT NABAE?
SO EVEN THE FIRST SEED CAME TO WATCH

SINCE WHEN?
HE'S GOT HIS LAPTOP... SO HE'S SCOUTING?
ガヤ
ガヤ
I WONDER HOW...
NABAE-KUN SEES THIS MATCH.
BUT I'M SURE HE SEES ME GETTING SUCKED INTO IDE-KUN'S PACE FOR A DRAMATIC COMEBACK...
THAT MEANS I'VE BEEN DOING WELL TILL THE FIRST SET...
NABAE-KUN WAS THE ONE WHO SAID "FIRST STRIKE IS A MUST" AGAINST IDE-KUN
IT'S EXACTLY WHAT'S HAPPENING....
...NO, IT'S NOT "HOW HE SEES ME"....

IDE-KUN'S SUPPORTERS,
OR THE DRAMATIC TURN OF EVENTS...
I WAS PREPARED FOR ALL THAT, AND I THOUGHT I WASN'T BOTHERED BY THEM, BUT...
MY BODY MUST HAVE BEEN REACTING TO THEM A LOT MORE THAN I IMAGINED.
I DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE MY GRIP GETTING THIS SLIPPERY BY MY SWEAT.
PHEW
NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY TO IGNORE IT, WITH MY HEAD, IF MY BODY STILL FEELS THE PRESSURE...
WHAT SHOULD I DO...?

THEN FIRST...
WHY DON'T I TRY FACING THE PRESSURE AND WRITING DOWN MY OBSERVATIONS RATHER THAN TRYING TO IGNORE THEM...

THEN I'VE GOT TO OVERCOME THAT PRESSURE...
IF I WANT TO FOCUS JUST ON THE TENNIS WITHOUT GETTING AFFECTED BY THE PRESSURE,
scratches scribbles


15-0
30-0
40-0
There's five times more people watching than usual and over 90% of them are rooting for Ide-kun's victory
- Ide-kun's trying to win his match so he can keep his promise with the child who was in the accident
- Ide-kun is strong under pressure and dramatic circumstances

- Ide-kun is str ng under pressure and dramatic circumstances
- If I lose here I can't g to the nationals
- If that happens I hav t give up on being a pro
NO... THAT'S NOT ALL...
カキ カキ カキ
THERE'S A LOT MORE THAN I IMAGINED...
MAYBE IT FELT TOO VAGUE BECAUSE I'VE BEEN TRYING TO LOOK AWAY.
THAT MIGHT HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN CREATING EVEN GREATER PRESSURE.
TIME

ANYWAY, LET'S TRY FACING THE THINGS FROM WHICH I'VE BEEN LOOKING AWAY
SO FAR.
THE MATCH WILL BE DECIDED IN THIS SET.
ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO KEEP WATCHING IDE-KUN LIKE BEFORE, AND...
FIGHT HIM HEAD ON!!

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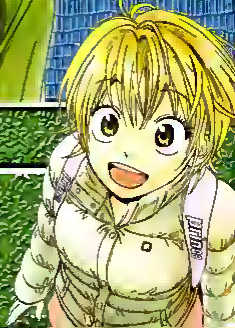
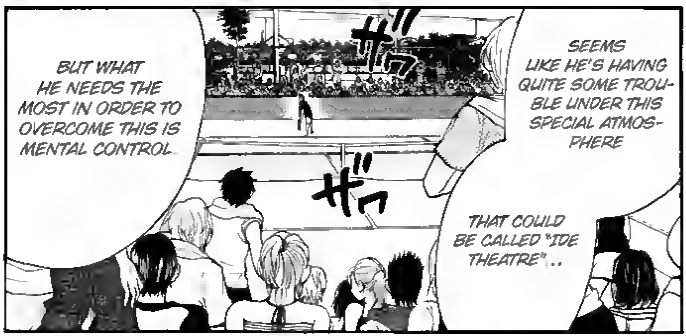
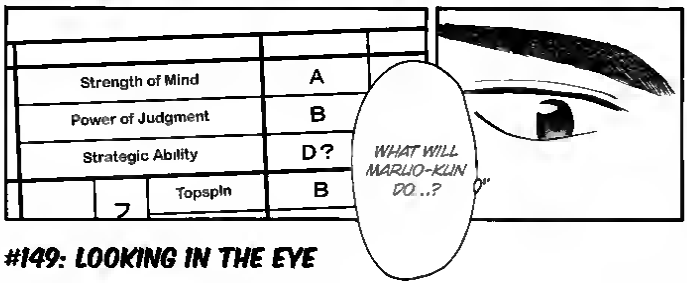
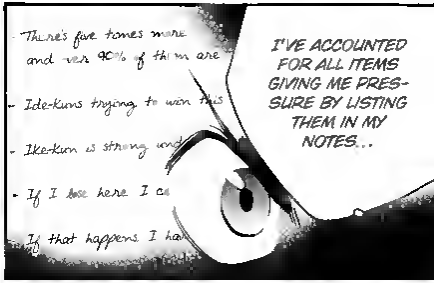



BUT WHAT HE NEEDS THE MOST IN ORDER TO OVERCOME THIS IS MENTAL CONTROL.
SEEMS LIKE HE'S HAVING QUITE SOME TROUBLE UNDER THIS SPECIAL ATMOSPHERE
THAT COULD BE CALLED "IDE THEATRE"..

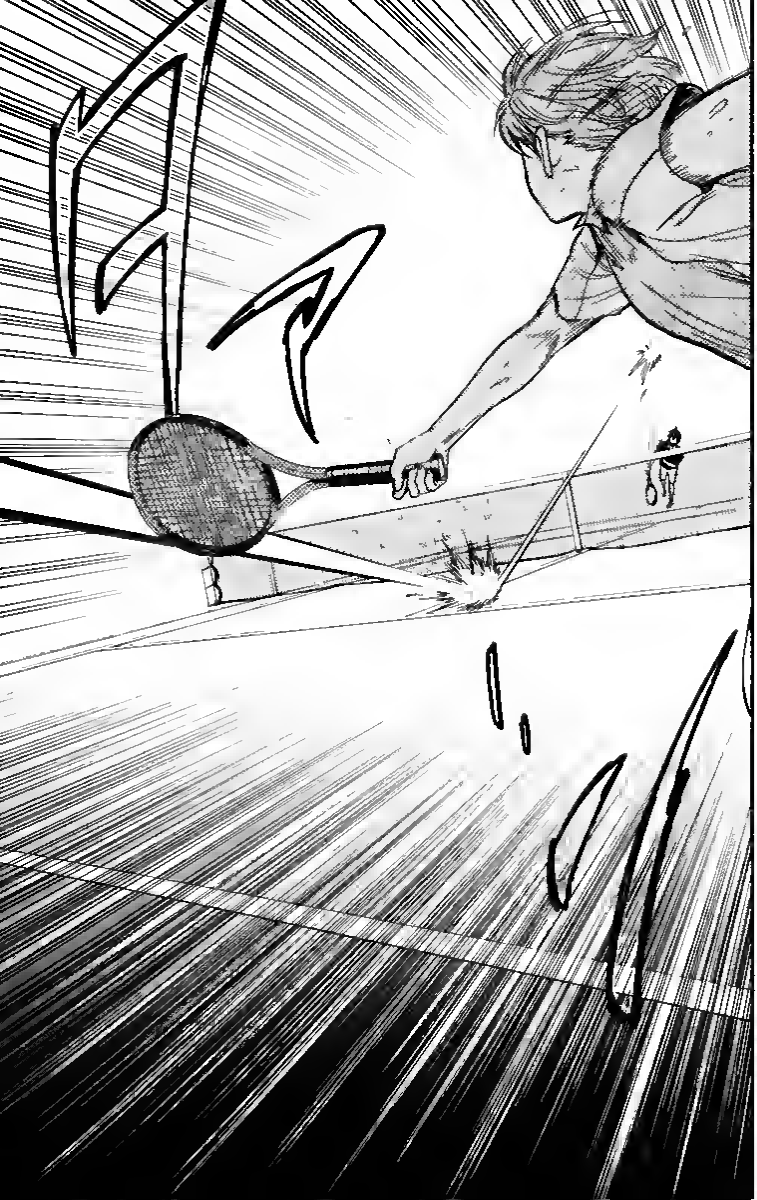


#149: LOOKING IN THE EYE

CONCEN-
TRATE ONLY
ON IDE-KUN!!

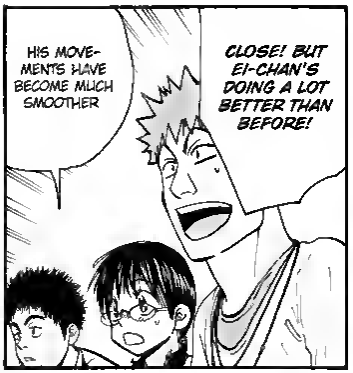

There's five games more
and over 90% of them are
- Ide-kuns trying to win this
- Ike-kun is strong
- If I lose here I ca
- If that happens I ha
I'VE ACCOUNTED FOR ALL ITEMS GIVING ME PRES-SURE BY LISTING THEM IN MY NOTES..

AND ONCE THE GAME STARTS...
SINCE IT WAS NO GOOD TRYING TO KEEP A BLIND EYE, I'LL TRY TO FACE THEM....



. . . . !!
HUH?
15 - 0.
FAST ...
THAT SERVE WAS AMAZING!!
OKAY.. ONE MORE TIME.
W-WHAT WAS THAT..?
DID MY SHOULDER MOVE SO SMOOTHLY BECAUSE I WASN'T PUTTING ANY UNNECESSARY STRAIN ON IT?
..THAT MEANS THE PRESSURE WAS CAUSING ME TO TIGHTEN UP MORE THAN I IMAGINED?

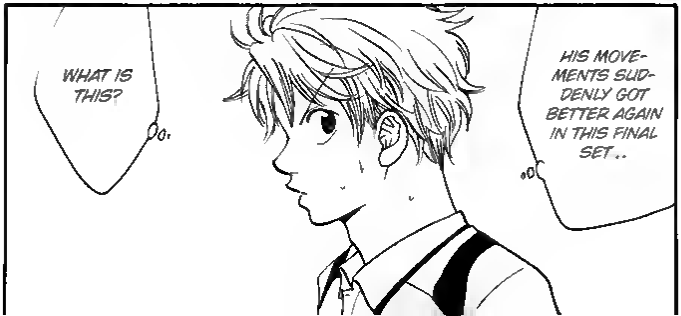
FOCUS ONLY ON THE OPPONENT DURING PLAY!
CLEARLY POINT OUT MY INSECURITIES IN BETWEEN POINTS, AND...
HA
GO!!
IT'S NOT JUST MY SHOULDER MY LEGS ARE FEELING LIGHTER, TOO


HIS MOVEMENTS HAVE BECOME MUCH SMOOTHER
CLOSE! BUT EI-CHAN'S DOING A LOT BETTER THAN BEFORE!

OUT! 15 - 15.
ドッ

ALL AMBIGUOUS FEELINGS I HAD IN MY HEAD ARE COMPLETELY GONE, AND MY BODY'S FEELING SHARPER TOO

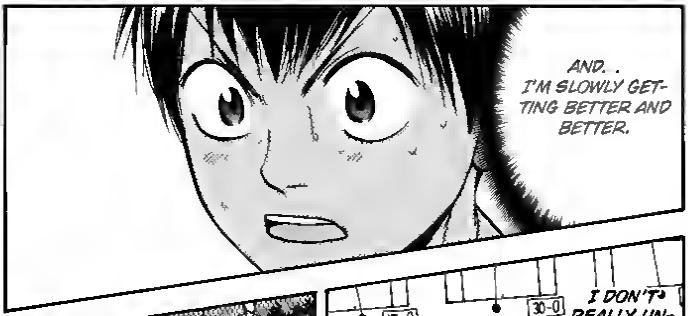
T-THAT WAS
BECAUSE MY BODY WAS MOVING TOO WELL.
IT'S MY MISS, BUT IT'S NOT BAD

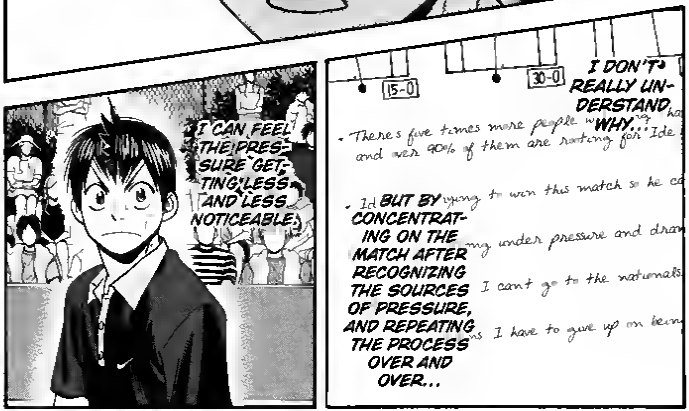

WHAT IS THIS?
HIS MOVEMENTS SUDDENLY GOT BETTER AGAIN IN THIS FINAL SET..

HA
SINCE I CAN PULL BACK MUCH MORE SMOOTHLY THAN BEFORE...
MY BODY FEELS MUCH SMOOTHER WITH ALL THE TENSION GONE...
I CAN HOLD OFF ON WHERE I'M GOING TO HIT... TILL THE VERY LAST MOMENT.
I CAN WAIT FOR THE BALL LONGER...

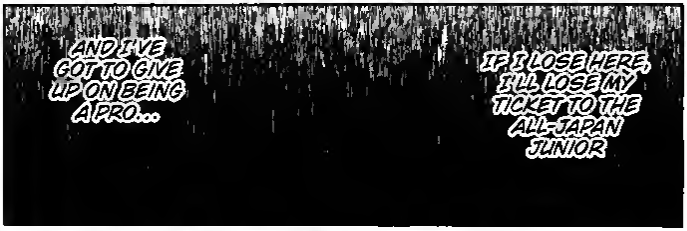
TOPSPIN... DOWN THE LINE!
TCH, SO IT'S THIS SIDE!

30 - 15
おぉぉ
YES!!

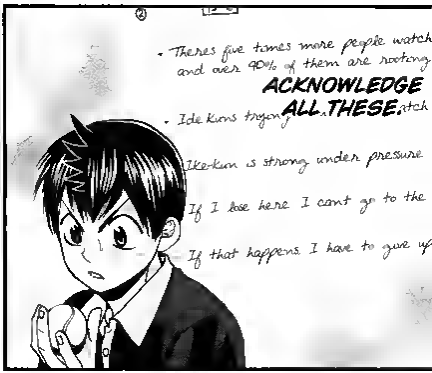

AND. .
I'M SLOWLY GET-
TING BETTER AND
BETTER.


I CAN FEEL
THE PRES-
SURE GET-
TING LESS
AND LESS
NOTICEABLE.
15-0
30-0
I DON'T
REALLY UN-
DERSTAND
WHY..
BUT BY
CONCENTRAT-
ING ON THE
MATCH AFTER
RECOGNIZING
THE SOURCES
OF PRESSURE,
AND REPEATING
THE PROCESS
OVER AND
OVER..

ARE ROOTING FOR IDE-KUN'S VICTORY.
MOST OF THE PEOPLE AROUND US


AND I'VE GOT TO GIVE UP ON BEING A PRO...
IF I LOSE HERE, I'LL LOSE MY TICKET TO THE ALL-JAPAN JUNIOR

FROM THE MOMENT I MAKE THE TOSS...


• Theres five times more people watch
and over 90% of them are rooting
ACKNOWLEDGE
ALL THESE.itch
• Ide kuns trajectory
Ike-kun is strong under pressure
If I lose here I cant go to the
If that happens I have to give up

THEN, PUT YOUR MIND BACK IN THE GAME...

SINCE MY VISION'S GOTTEN WIDER,
I CAN SEE MY OPPONENT CLEARLY.
HA
I CAN FEEL THAT I'M MUCH MORE RE-LAXED THAN BEFORE!!
THIS MIGHT HAVE BEEN...
HOW I NORMALLY PLAYED...

40 - 15.
THIS GUY!
HA

Y-YES! KEEP!!
おお
GAME, MARUO. 1 - 0. FINAL SET.
お
GO BIG-BRO... GO!!
IT'S REALLY TURNING INTO A GREAT MATCH!!
HEY, MARUO MADE HIS FIRST SOLID KEEP IN QUITE A WHILE!!
ガヴ
ガヴ
ガヴ
BUT IDE'S THE MAN FOR CLOSE MATCHES!

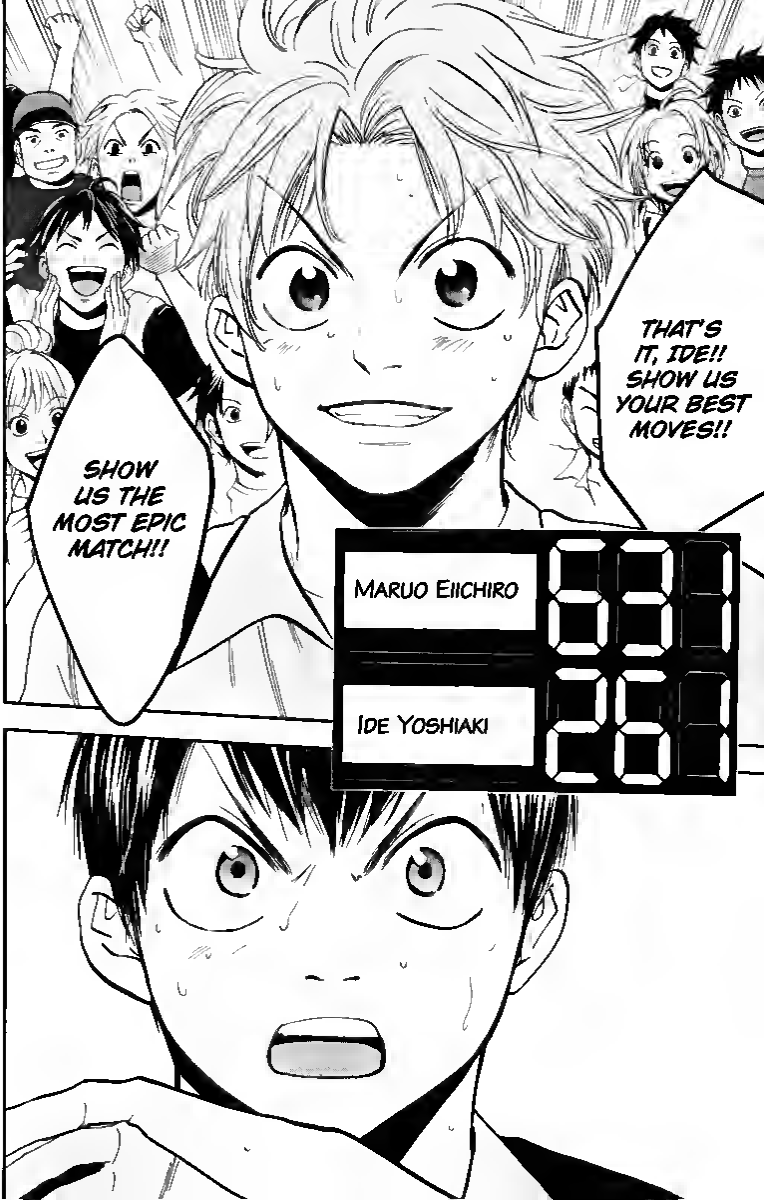
IF YOU CAN KEEP THINGS LIKE THAT...
AND IF OUR SKILLS ARE ON PAR...
INTER-ESTING...
LET'S HEAT THINGS UP!!

HMGH
RGH

15 - 0.

WOW, IDE'S DEFINITELY THE BEST!!
KEEP ON GOING! GO GO!!
G-GO EI-CHAN, GO!!

RYA
GAME, IDE. 1 - 1. FINAL SET.


THAT'S IT, IDE!! SHOW US YOUR BEST MOVES!!
SHOW US THE MOST EPIC MATCH!!
MARUO EIICHIRO
IDE YOSHIAKI

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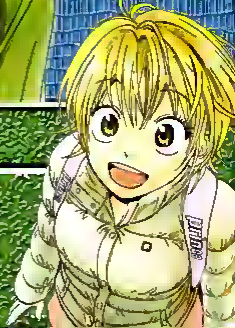
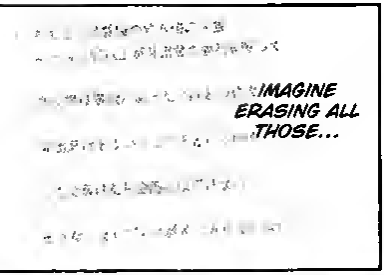


MY BODY GETS FREED FROM THE PRESSURE
WHEN I CONCENTRATE BACK ON IDE-KUN AFTER IDENTIFYING THE SOURCE OF PRESSURE.

MARUO EIICHIRO
IDE YOSHIAKI

IF I TRY TO, LET'S SAY..
IMAGINE COMPLETELY WIPING OFF THE PRESSURE...
THEN I WONDER WHAT HAPPENS


IMAGINE ERASING ALL THOSE...

SO ONCE I DEFINE THE THINGS THAT ARE GIVING ME THIS PRESSURE...

IT'S GOOD TO FACE THE PRESSURE, BUT I'M SURE IT'S BETTER TO HAVE AS LITTLE PRESSURE AS POSSIBLE...

#150 IMAGE

HA

0 – 15
WOWWWW, IDE'S RETURN ACE!!
WHAT A SHOT!!
SUPER AGGRES-SIVE!!
I BARELY ERASED HALF OF IT...
BUT... IT WASN'T TOO BAD.
BREAK THIS ONE!!
RGH
IDE-KUN!!
FOCUS ON
AND ONCE I MANAGE TO ERASE AS MUCH OF IT AS POSSI-BLE...
VISUALIZE THE PRES-SURE CLEAR-LY AGAIN

CONTROL!!

HA

RGH

I WAS ABLE TO ERASE A LOT MORE THAN BEFORE...

THIS IS DEFINITELY BETTER!!
15 - 15
YES!
MARUO'S DOING PRETTY WELL.
ARAYA
WOW- WOW- I KNEW THIS ONE WOULD BE HEATED UP.
GAME, MARUO. 2 - 1. FINAL SET.
DOES IT MEAN HE'S GOTTEN EVEN STRONGER?
IDE'S USUALLY AT HIS BEST ON THE FINAL SET, BUT IF MARUO'S FIGHTING ON PAR WITH HIM,

YEAH. JUST NOW.
YOU WON, OKADA?
BUT IDE'S GONNA BE THE ONE WHO WINS.
HUH?
HEY, YOU BASTARD, HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT IDE'S GONNA WIN?
IF IT'S A CLOSE MATCH WITH THEM HAVING EQUAL SKILLS, EVERYTHING COMES DOWN TO THEIR MENTAL STRENGTH
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE WHO CAN MATCH HIS MENTAL STRENGTH.
YES
WHEN I WAS TWELVE, HE AND I WERE CHOSEN FOR AN OVERSEAS CAMP,
AND IT WAS PRETTY INCREDIBLE WHEN HE PLAYED IN THE FLORIDA JUNIOR COMPETITION.

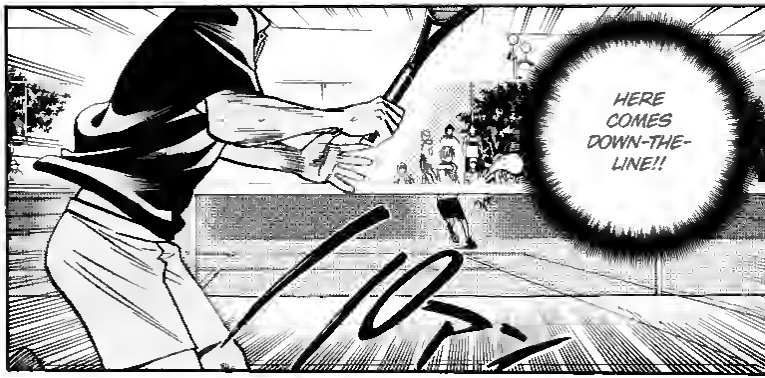
WHEN WE WERE ALL INTIMIDATED FROM GOING OVERSEAS FOR THE FIRST TIME,
HE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS REALLY ENJOYING IT.
HEY! YOU OVER THERE!!
YOU'RE PLAYING IN THE COMPETITION, RIGHT? WANNA WARM-UP WITH ME?
JAPANESE?
WARM-UP! THAT'S ENGLISH, RIGHT? IS IT WORKING?
EVEN IN AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE ANYONE WOULD BE AFRAID, HE CAN ENJOY IT LIKE ITS NOTHING.
Wow
AND ONCE HE STARTED PLAYING...
HA

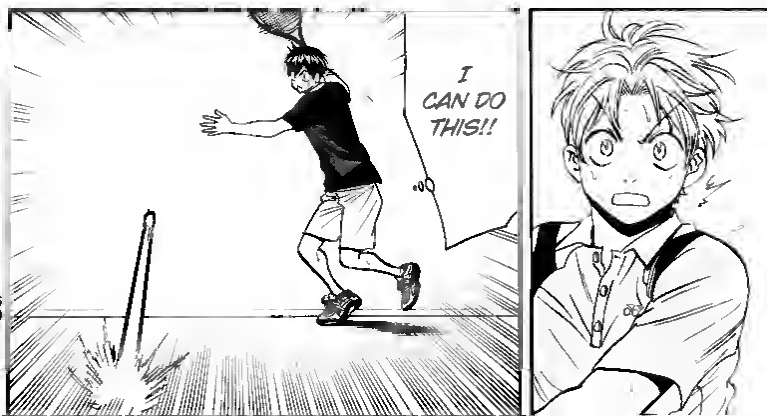
YOSHI
YOSHI
HE WAS DRAWING PEOPLE IN THROUGH HIS USUAL SUPER-AGGRESSIVE TENNIS.
YOSHI
A TALENT THAT'LL DEFINITELY SET HIS FOOT ON THE WORLD STAGE WITHIN THE NEXT TEN YEARS OF HIS GROWTH
ALTHOUGH HE WAS ONLY IN THE TOP 4, THE EXPERTS AND THE MEDIA ALL PRAISED THE STRENGTH OF IDE'S HEART MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE
YOSHI
ARE YOU SERIOUS...
THEY SAID HE WAS ON A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT CALIBER.

HIS BODY IS UNDERGOING RAPID GROWTH RIGHT NOW.
THAT'S WHY IT'LL BE NO SURPRISE WHEN HE STARTS FIGHTING AT THE TOP OF WORLD
I BELIEVE HE WAS BORN TO BE ON THAT STAGE.
IF YOU GET DRAGGED INTO THE FINAL SET AGAINST THAT IDE,
YOU'VE GOT NOWHERE TO RUN.

WELL, I CAN UNDERSTAND HOW YOU WANNA ROOT FOR YOUR FRIEND,
BUT YOU HAVEN'T PLAYED MARUO YET, HAVE YOU?
IT'S TRUE THAT HE GETS SWAYED BY THE SITUATION EASILY, BUT CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S AT HIS BEST CONDITION TODAY?
EVEN IF YOU SAY THAT, HE'S JUST TOP 8 IN SAITAMA, RIGHT?
SECOND PLACE IN KANAGAWA'S WORTH A LOT MORE.
I THINK BOTH OF YOU ARE RIGHT.
IF YOU ASK ME, WHO'S PLAYED BOTH, MARUO WAS HONESTLY THE TOUGHER OPPONENT.
THIS MATCH IS REALLY HARD TO PREDICT.
AND
REGARDLESS OF WHO GOES THROUGH, EITHER ONE WOULD DEFINITELY BE A HUGE THREAT FOR US.

- THERE'S FIVE TIMES MORE PEOPLE WATCHING THAN USUAL, AND OVER 80% OF THEM ARE ROOTING FOR IKE-KUN'S VICTORY.
- IDE-KUN' S TRYING TO WIN THIS MATCH SO HE CAN KEEP HIS PROMISE WITH THE CHILD WHO WAS IN THE ACCIDENT.
- IKE-KUN IS STRONG UNDER PRESSURE AND TRAMATIC CIRCUMSTANCES.
- IF I LOSE HERE, I CAN'T GO TO THE NATIONALS.
FIRST, DEFINE THE PRESSURE SOURCES CLEARLY AND WITHOUT LOOKING AWAY.
NOW IMAGINE ERASING THEM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.
ONCE YOU FEEL YOUR BODY GETTING LIGHTER...
CONCENTRATE ONLY ON IDE-KUN, AND...
CRUSH HIM WITH CHANGE-OF-PACE!!


HERE COMES DOWN-THE-LINE!!


I CAN DO THIS!!

GAME, MARUO. 4 - 3
YES!! KEEP!!
HA
10

I CAN STILL WIN AGAINST THE PRESSURE EVEN IF I'M NOT GIFTED WITH MENTAL STRENGTH LIKE IDE-KUN.
ALTHOUGH IT TAKES TIME AND EFFORT,
IF I CAN BEAT THE PRESSURE I'M SURE I'LL BE ABLE TO BEAT IDE-KUN, TOO!!

AS I THOUGHT, RATHER THAN JUST THINKING ABOUT THE SOURCES OF PRESSURE,
IT'S MUCH BETTER TO IMAGINE GETTING RID THEM.

FACE IT RATHER THAN RUNNING AWAY.
ONCE YOU SEE IT, IMAGINE IT DISAPPEAR.
じっ
スー…

IDE, KEEP NO MATTER WHAT!!
HANG IN THERE, BIG-BRO!
TIME!
HA
RVCA

IT'S SLOWLY GETTING BETTER AND BETTER...
THE WEIGHT OF THEIR SHOTS GETS HEAVIER AND HEAVIER AS BOTH SIDES CONTINUE KEEPING THEIR SERVICE GAMES.
AND THE FINAL SET FINALLY REACHES 5 – 5.
4 – 4
5 – 4
尾栄一郎
32 井出 義明

FROM THIS POINT ON, THE MATCH GETS DECIDED ONCE EITHER SIDE CREATES A TWO GAME LEAD.
IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S A TIGHT SITUATION WHERE THE ONE WHO BREAKS FIRST ALMOST CERTAINLY GRABS VICTORY...
GAME 11 IS EIICHIRO'S SERVE.
IDE'S THE FIRST ONE TO GO FOR THE BREAK.

EI-CHAN!! YOU CAN DO IT!!
FINISH IT HERE!!
IDE, BREAK NO MATTER WHAT!!
NAC-CHAN!
I made it

YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP!!
THAT'S RIGHT! YOU CAN DO IT, EI-CHAN!!
APPARENTLY THEY'RE IN THE SAME CLUB.
IS MARUO EI-CHAN?
OH, THAT'S TAKASAKI NATSU.
THAT'S RIGHT...
THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO'RE CHEERING FOR ME...
I'M CHEERING FOR YOU!
YEAH, MARUO. DON'T LOSE TO THE PRESSURE.
I'LL DEFINITELY WIN!!

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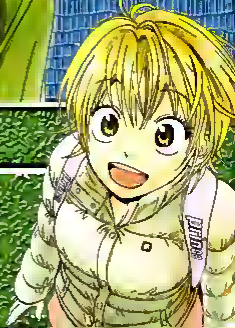
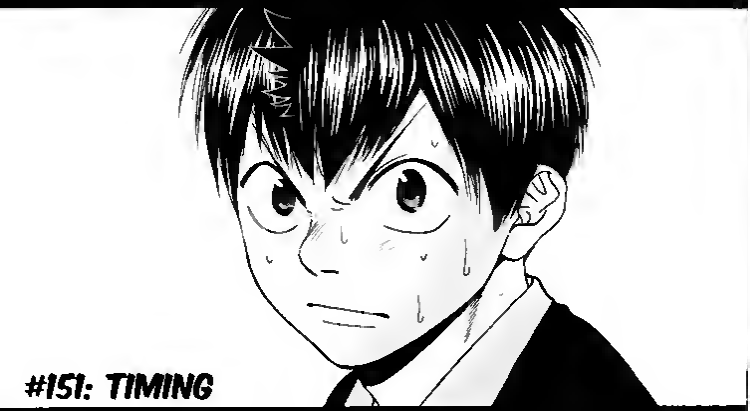
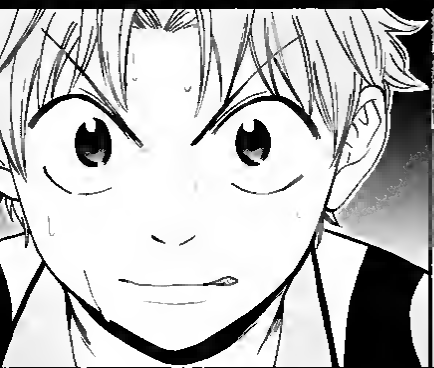


IF I LOSE HERE, I CAN'T GO TO THE NATIONALS.



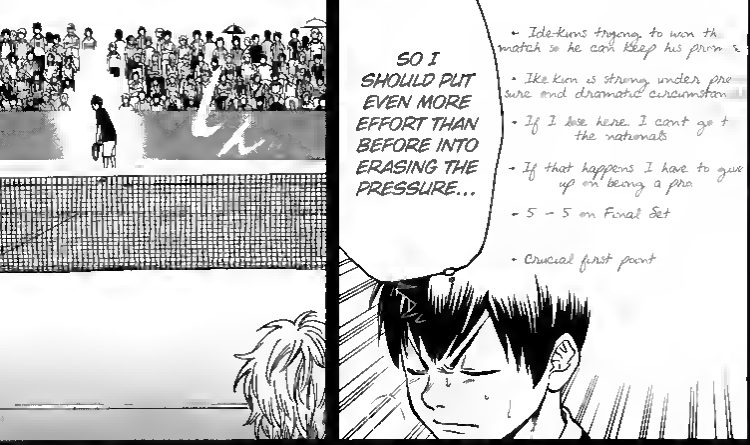
#151: TIMING

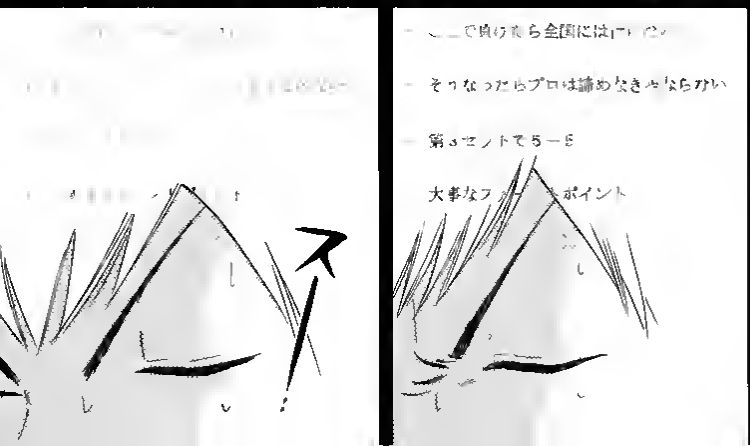
IF THAT HAPPENS, I HAVE TO GIVE UP ON BECOMING A PRO.



IDE-KUN IS STRONG IN THESE SORTS OF DRAMATIC MATCHES.

FIRST POINT OF SUCH AN IMPORTANT SERVICE GAME.
MOREOVER, THE ONE WHO BREAKS FIRST HAS AN ABSOLUTE ADVANTAGE FROM THIS POINT ON.
AGAINST IDE-KUN WHO'S IN HIS BEST CONDITION, MOTIVATED TO WIN FOR THE SAKE OF THE INJURED CHILD,
AND IN FRONT OF A CROWD BIGGER THAN ANYTHING I'VE SEEN IN THE PAST... WITH OVER 90% OF IT ROOTING FOR IDE-KUN.
THE SOURCES OF PRESSURE KEEP ACCUMULATING AS THE MATCH PROGRESSES...


SO I SHOULD PUT EVEN MORE EFFORT THAN BEFORE INTO ERASING THE PRESSURE...
• Ide-kuns trying to won th match so he can keep his prom
• Ike-kun is strong under pre sure and dramatic circumstan
• If I lose here, I cant go t the nationals
• If that happens I have to give up on being a pro
• 5 - 5 on Final Set
• Crucial first point


• ここで負けたら全国には行けない
• そうなったらプロは諦めなきゃならない
• 第3セットで5－5
• 大事なファーストポイント

15 SEC-
ONDS.
...IT'S
GONE!

HA
14

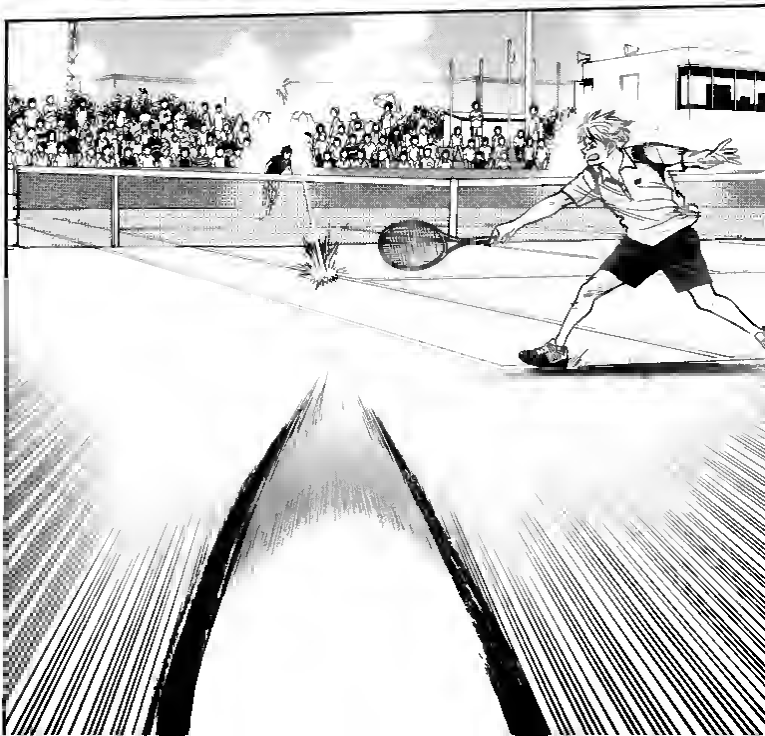
HMPH!
.....!!

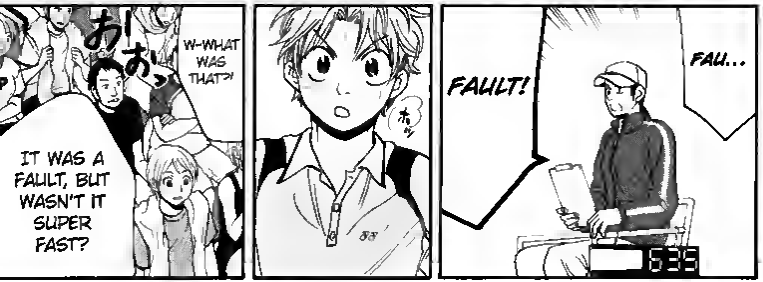
A RETURN ACE!!
UWOOOOOO
ONCE YOU COME THIS FAR, IDE'S INVINCI-BLE!!
0 - 15
YEAHH-HHH!!

EVEN THOUGH I WAS ABLE TO IMAGINE ERASING THE PRESSURE MORE THAN EVER BEFORE... WHY?
BUT MY SERVE WASN'T AT ITS BEST CONDITION.
ONE MORE LEAD!!
SHOOT ...
...THEN WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?
...DOES THAT MEAN IT'S NOT GOOD TO ERASE EVERYTHING?
RIGHT AFTER THE IMAGE DISAPPEARED COMPLETELY, IT FELT LIKE ALL MY STRENGTH WAS FLOWING OUT ..
BUT IF IT'S NOT GOOD TO ERASE ALL THE PRESSURE ...
I WAS MAKING GOOD PROGRESS AFTER DEFINING THE SOURCES OF PRESSURE AND TRYING TO IMAGINE ERASING THEM.
SHOOT... THERE'S NO MORE TIME LEFT.
THAT'S WHY IT REFLECTS YOUR MENTAL STATE BETTER.
THE SERVE IS THE ONLY SHOT WHERE YOU HIT WITH YOUR OWN STRENGTH ALONE.

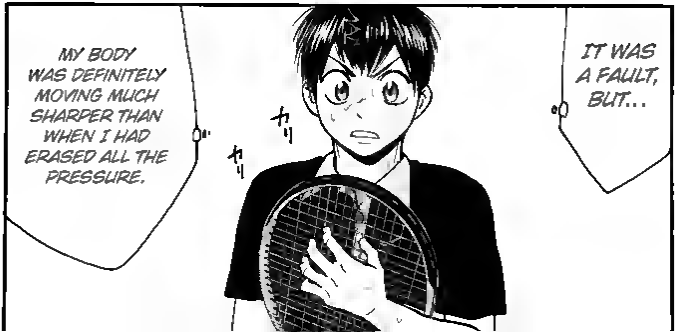
I LOST MY FIRST POINT
5 - 5 ON FINAL SET.
IF HE BREAKS HERE...
THERE ARE STILL UNKNO
FACTORS THAT STILL NEE
BE IF I LOSE, I CAN'T GO
THE NATIONALS I'LL HAVE
GIVE UP ON BECOMING A P
THERE'S NOT ENOUGH TIME
15 SEC-ONDS.
THE PRO-CESS OF PINPOINT-ING THE PRESSURE ITSELF IS GETTING HARDER
AND I'VE GOT TO IMAGINE ERASING THESE...
I'VE GOT TO TRY ERASING THEM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE...
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO ERASE ALL OF THEM ANYWAY.

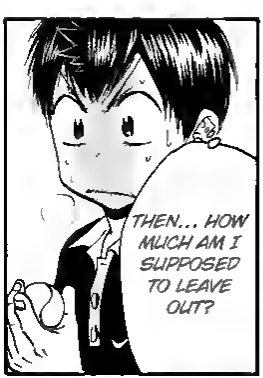
THIS IS IT...



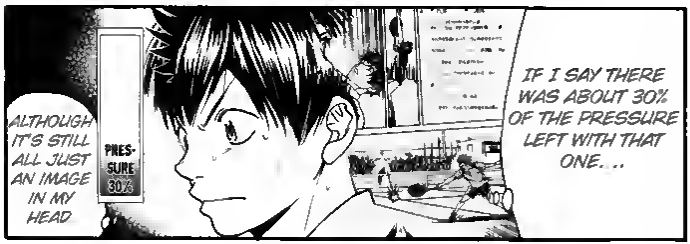

W-WHAT WAS THAT?!
IT WAS A FAULT, BUT WASN'T IT SUPER FAST?
FAULT!
FAU...

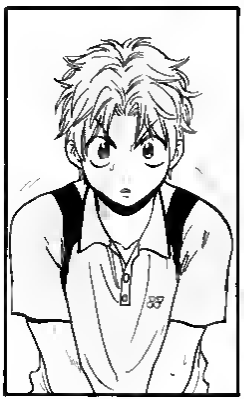
HOW DO YOU EVEN GO FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT UNDER THIS SITUATION IN THE FIRST PLACE?
HE CERTAINLY HITS SOME INCREDIBLE SERVES FROM TIME TO TIME.


MY BODY WAS DEFINITELY MOVING MUCH SHARPER THAN WHEN I HAD ERASED ALL THE PRESSURE.
IT WAS A FAULT, BUT...


THEN... HOW MUCH AM I SUPPOSED TO LEAVE OUT?

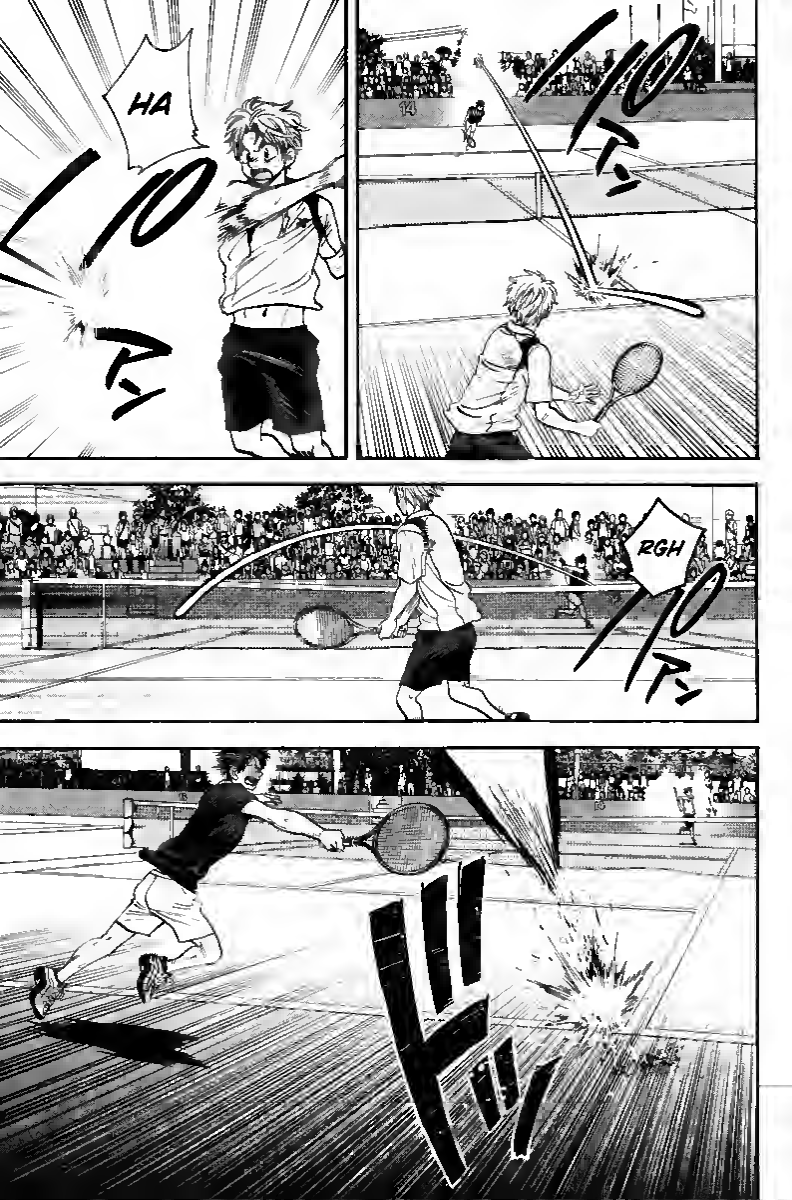
SO THAT MEANS... IT'S BETTER TO LEAVE SOME PRESSURE BEHIND?


ALTHOUGH IT'S STILL ALL JUST AN IMAGE IN MY HEAD
PRES-SURE 30%
IF I SAY THERE WAS ABOUT 30% OF THE PRESSURE LEFT WITH THAT ONE...



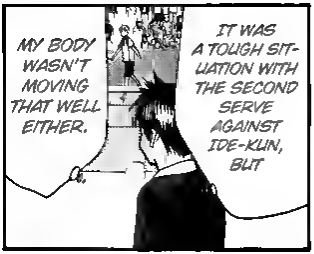
HOW'S THIS...

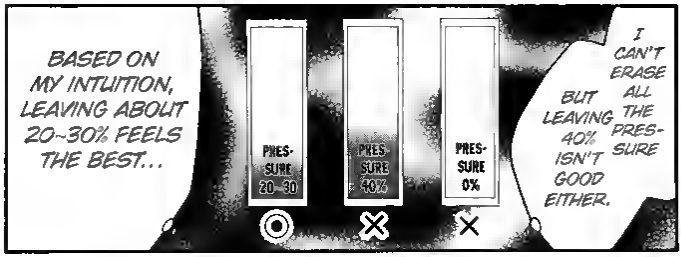
PRES-SURE 40%
LET'S TRY LEAVING ABOUT 40% ON THE NEXT ONE...


HA
RGH

CRAP... NO GOOD.
ONLY TWO MORE, IDE!!
0 - 30
YES, HE GOT IT!!

IF HE GETS THE NEXT ONE, IT'S 0 - 40... I'VE GOT NOWHERE TO RUN.


MY BODY WASN'T MOVING THAT WELL EITHER.
IT WAS A TOUGH SITUATION WITH THE SECOND SERVE AGAINST IDE-KUN, BUT


BASED ON MY INTUITION, LEAVING ABOUT 20~30% FEELS THE BEST...
PRESSURE 20~30
PRESSURE 40%
PRESSURE 0%
BUT LEAVING 40% ISN'T GOOD EITHER.
I CAN'T ERASE ALL THE PRESSURE

NO, NO. THIS IS ALL BASED ON AN IMAGE IN MY HEAD.
THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN ACCURATELY GAUGE THE SIZE OF THE PRESSURE!
AND I'VE NEVER EXPERIENCED THIS MUCH PRESSURE IN THE FIRST PLACE, SO I CAN'T SAY FOR SURE.
PRESSURE
PRESSURE
BUT THE SIZE OF THE PRESSURE VARIES EACH TIME...
HE'S THINKING SOMETHING AGAIN ..
I'VE GOT TO WATCH OUT.
15 SECONDS.
LEAVE ONLY A LITTLE OUT...
PRESSURE
IMAGINE... ERASING... THEM...
PRESSURE

HA
LEAVE ONLY A LITTLE OUT...
PRESSURE
YES!

ERK
IT'S FAST!
1/64!!
I CAN DO THIS!!

ダッ
ダッ
ダッ
トーン

15 - 30
YES!!
YES!!

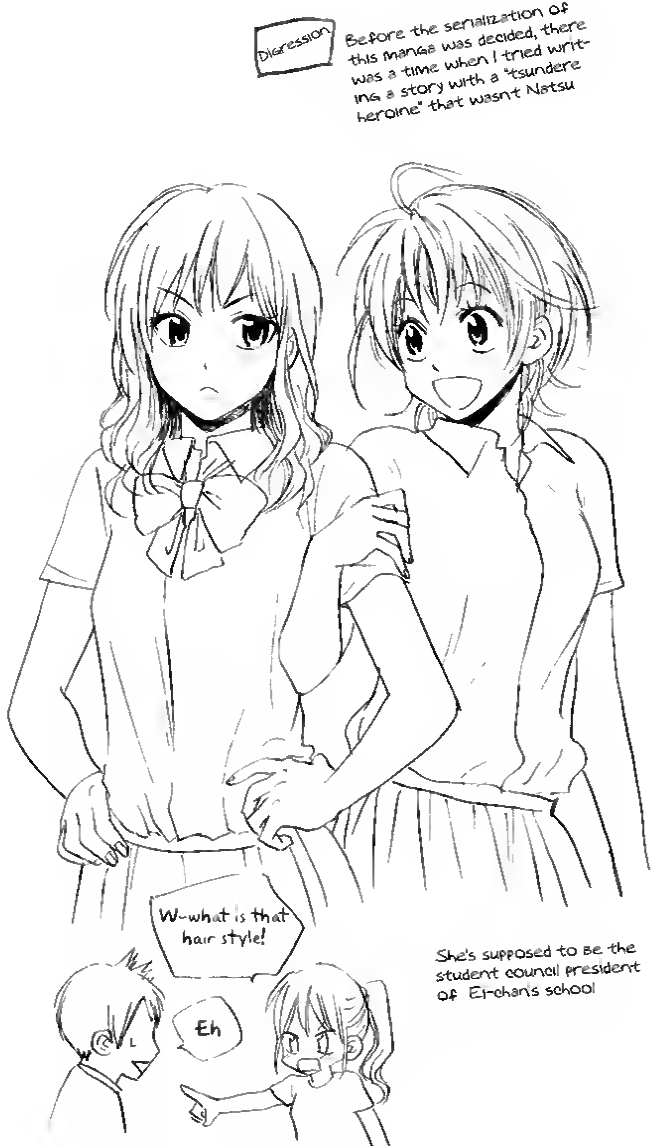
I CAN DO THIS!! LEAVING ABOUT 20~30% OF THE PRESSURE IS THE BEST!!
GOOD... THAT WAS DEFINITELY GOOD!!
ARGH... I FEEL LIKE I'M GONNA PASS OUT FROM THE TENSION.
IT'S 'CAUSE WE KNOW THAT HE'S BETTING HIS FUTURE ON THIS.
HUH?
YOU KNOW.. TODAY'S A BIT DIFFERENT FROM USUAL.
WE WANT HIM TO WIN AFTER COMING THIS FAR.

WE JUST HAVE TO LET HIM WIN WITH THE POWER OF OUR SUPPORT!!
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, THEN RAISE YOUR VOICE MORE!
WHEN YOSHI'S IN A CLOSE MATCH AGAINST SOMEONE, HIS OPPONENT ALWAYS STARTS GETTING SCARED AT THIS STAGE ..
FOOL!
BUT THAT MARUO-KUN IS...
YOU CAN DO IT
YOU CAN DO IT
YOU CAN DO IT
YOSHI, THIS IS IT!!
TAKE THIS AND GET THE MATCH POINT!!
IN THIS HIGH-PRESSURE SITUATION...
I'VE PRETTY MUCH FIGURED OUT HOW I CAN MAINTAIN MY STRENGTH.
ALL THAT'S LEFT IS HOW WELL I CAN EXECUTE IT...
ALL I NEED TO DO IS BELIEVE IN MYSELF AND PULL THROUGH.

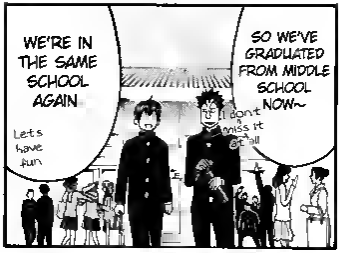
I'LL BEAT MYSELF... AND BEAT IDE-KUN!!

TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 17

Baby Steps


Digression
Before the serialization of this manga was decided, there was a time when I tried writing a story with a "tsundere heroine" that wasn't Natsu
W-what is that hair style!
Eh
She's supposed to be the student council president of Ei-chan's school

Baby Steps ⑯ Extra



I'M SURE I'LL GET ONE FASTER THAN EI-CHAN
I'LL BE GRADUATING BEFORE GRADUATION~ JUST KIDDING~
IT'D BE SO COOL IF I CAN GET A GIRLFRIEND~
キュポ
キュポ

Date

Hello, this is Katsuki.
Thank you so much for picking up volume 16.

March 11th, I'm sure many of you had your life flipped upside down from that earthquake, but I'm happy that I can still write my manga and have it read like this. Although it won't be crucial to your everyday life, I want to draw a manga that'll put even a little joy into your life.

Although this entire volume was about the match, Ide's match will continue on for a little bit more. Then see you next volume.

あなたは、この本を読んで、どのような感想をおもちになりましたか。

コミックス編集の参考にさせていただきたいと思います。「読後の感想」と合わせて、左記のところあてにお知らせください。

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N.D.C. 726 191p 18 cm

講談社コミックス 四四五九巻
ベイビーステップ⑯
2011年4月15日 第1刷発行
定価はカバーに表示してあります。

著者 勝木光
発行者 清水保雅
発行所 株式会社講談社
東京都文京区音羽二―一二―二一
（郵便番号一一二―八〇〇一）
編集部〔03〕五三九五―三四九九
販売部〔03〕五三九五―三六〇八

印刷所 株式会社フォーネット社
製版所 株式会社二葉写真製版
製本所 株式会社フォーネット社

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ISBN978-4-06-384459-7 Printed in Japan